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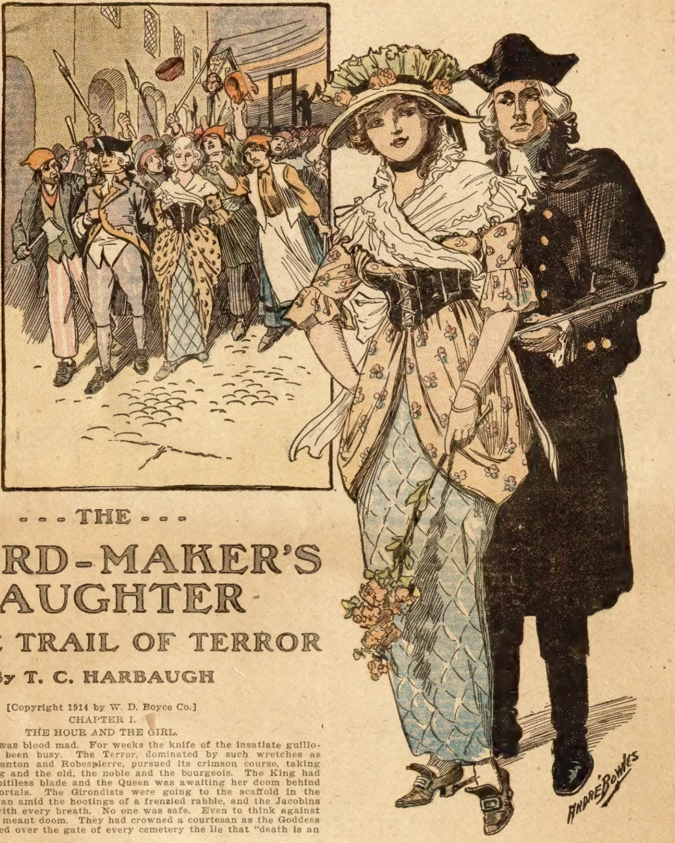

THE SWORD-MAKER'S DAUGHTER

Or, THE TRAIL OF TERROR

By T. C. HARBAUGH

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CHAPTER I.

THE HOUR AND THE GIRL.

ALL Paris was blood mad. For weeks the knife of the insatiate guillotine had been busy. The Terror, dominated by such wretches as Marat, Danton and Robespierre, pursued its crimson course, taking the young and the old, the noble and the bourgeois. The King had felt the pitiless blade and the Queen was awaiting her doom behind barred portals. The Girondists were going to the scaffold in the terrible van amid the hootings of a frenzied rabble, and the Jacobins were drinking blood with every breath. No one was safe. Even to think against the monsters in power meant doom. They had crowned a courtesan as the Goddess of Reason, and inscribed over the gate of every cemetery the lie that "death is an eternal sleep."

It was the red summer of 1793, and blood lust was at its floodtide. The death cart rumbled remorselessly through the streets of Paris. Neighbor suspected neighbor, and father dared not voice his thoughts to son for fear of arrest, and arrest meant the guillotine. The pall of doom was over all. The very stars seemed to hasten in their courses as if to leave the stricken city to its fate. All this because the mistresses of kings had ground to dust the very souls of the people by their extravagances, and for this the innocent were perishing by thousands. It was the reaping of the harvest of sin, the garnering of the tares royalty had sown.

Through one of the darkened streets of Paris a young girl was fleeing as if from a wolfish pack. Her nimble feet seemed armed with fear, and when she looked back, as ever and anon she did, she gasped in mortal terror and sped breathlessly on.

"Heaven help me!" she panted in her pauseless flight.

Behind her rose the mad shouts of a merciless mob. She heard, pressed her hand to her heart, and shivered. Her face was white, and her dark tresses streamed like silken gonfalons in her wake. The glitter of an occasional light gave birth to new fears. Whenever she saw it she turned into another street and flitted on through the darkness.

She sped past Notre Dame, scarcely looking up at the splendid edifice, bounded across one of the beautiful bridges of the Seine, and at last, for want of breath, came to a halt.

"The wretch!" she panted. "I hate the very ground he treads! If I do not become his wife I am to be blacklisted. He knows what I did, the villain! But I could not help it. The girl wanted a friend, and I befriended her, and now she is in the Terror's clutch. She slew Marat, the blood-wolf, caught him in his bath and drove the dagger of vengeance into his heart. God pity Charlotte Corday as I do! Take her, Jesu, to thy arms when the knife is done with her. I know she is pardoned already. She struck for liberty and must pay the penalty," and then, with another look down the street, she resumed her flight.

A few more steps and she was in the Rue Victoire, a narrow thoroughfare with old-fashioned dwellings dating back to the times of the almost forgotten kings.

Suddenly she brought up in front of a door, the knob of which she wrenched with eagerness. In another second she was in a half-darkened hallway. No one confronted her. She found a staircase at the farther end of the corridor, and this she ascended rapidly.

"Who is there?" asked a voice from somewhere.

The girl did not reply, for having reached the passage running from the top of the staircase, she kept on until she found another door, by which she ascended to the flattened roof of the house.

There she paused and looked over the city. Cries came up to her from everywhere. A line of moving torches told her where the mob was. Ten thousand crazed brutes were shouting for the Terror which had drunk the blood of a king. For a moment the girl looked and listened with a smile.

She was safe now, perhaps. She had escaped the enemy on her trail, for, as she hoped, no one had seen her enter the house.

All at once the trapdoor by which she had ascended to her rather lofty perch opened, and the girl caught sight of a face. She leaped forward like a tigress. Dropping on her knees, she seized the door and thrust it back. The face disappeared.

"You shall not deliver me to the Terror, Mother Nox,' she hissed. "You shall not hand Aimee D'Albert over to the wolf. I will die here first!" and she pressed the trapdoor down with all her strength, despite the growling underneath it.

For five minutes she knelt there, holding the door fast, and her powers, girl that she was, seemed prodigious. At last she sprang to her feet and bounded across the roof. There was a scant space between the house and its neighbor, and, gathering up her nerves, she leaped across it. On, on she went, as confident of her footing as though she was still on the street below.

The race ended at last. In the middle of a certain roof, a full block from the house she had entered, she found another trapdoor, which she jerked open.

"This is the old nest, thank Heaven!" she cried. "This is home, at any rate."

She found a staircase which she descended with confidence. At its foot she leaned against the wall and pulled herself together. Presently she found a door which she opened. She was now in a lighted room where a man was polishing a sword at a work-bench.

The fugitive was not more than nineteen. She was finely formed, and possessed a natural grace and dignity which displayed itself in all her steps and actions. Her complexion, while it exhibited the deeper and warmer tints of the South, was lighted up and beautified with the clearer color of the North. Her hair was of peculiar richness and beauty. It seemed black, while the ends of the tresses under a clear light were of a deep and lustrous gold color. Her eyes, too, were of a color variable, like the wave which borrows its tint from the shadow, or the light blue when she was thoughtful—almost black when lighted up with emotion. Hers was a pure Grecian mouth, with well-defined lips, whose expression, fluctuating between tenderness and severity, seemed formed equally to breathe of love and happiness, or of patriotism and heroic devotion. Her skin was of that delicate and transparent healthiness through which the mantling blush is seen suddenly.

Such, in brief, was the girl who paused, gasping still, in the gleams of the sword-maker's lamp.

Her father was a man of fifty, with iron muscles, but he was as dextrous and nimble as a man of thirty. Everybody in Paris had heard of Bois D'Albert, the sword-maker, and his blades, that never bent at any obstacle, had world-wide fame.

Aimee was an only child, her mother having died in bringing her into the world, but the father had raised her with love and faithfulness, according to his pledge to the wife of his bosom.

The girl watched her father closely while she made a herculean effort to control her emotions.

"What has happened, child?" queried old Bois. "You have been frightened."

"And why not?" was the reply. "I have been chased by the Terror."

The sword-maker left his work and glided over to where Aimee stood.

"By the Terror?" cried he. "Did I not warn you, girl——"

"I know," she interrupted.

"You have been absent nearly all day."

His voice, though fatherly, was quite severe.

"You have heard?" cried Aimee. "Marat the monster is dead. He was slain in his bath by one Charlotte Corday. I encountered the girl upon her arrival in Paris and did her a little service. I was seen, and that is why I have been in hiding. When I showed myself in the Rue des Cordeliers, where Marat lived, I saw the gendarmes dragging Charlotte out of the house. She still held the bloody knife that took the wolf's life. It is a wonder they did not kill her on the spot, but they have reserved her for the guillotine. When I came out of hiding tonight I was seized from behind, and when I looked back I saw the face of Jean Artois, who is in the Terror's pay."

"The rascal!" growled old Bois.

"Rascal and devil," cried Aimee, reddening. "What, think you, he said to me whilst he held me fast, his grip like a steel vise? If I do not become his wife he will report me to the triumvirate for having been seen with Charlotte Corday. I suddenly broke from his grasp and fled. Fear lent speed to my feet. I heard his laugh behind me, but that only spurred me on. I broke into Mother Nox's house——"

"Into that she cat's lair?" interrupted the sword-maker.

"Yes, it was the secret way home. The vixen followed me to the roof, but I held down the trapdoor and kept her at bay. Then across the roofs I flew and—here I am!"

The words ended with a triumphant smile.

"What did the woman do it for?" asked D'Albert. He was thinking of Charlotte then.

"For the good of France, she told them," answered Aimee. "For true liberty. Her heart is all right, but she is but a girl and the monsters are legion. They'll have her life for her deed. But she will go to the guillotine the bravest woman in all this world."

"And you? You will have to take Jean Artois at his word——"

"Never!" broke in Aimee, and her voice rang like a trumpet through the shop. "The wife of that spying wolf? Have you forgotten, my father, that I am your child?"

"God slay me when I forget!" exclaimed the old man, and the next moment he had his beautiful daughter in his arms. "You are the image of the sainted one. No, you shall not become Jean's wife. I swear it on the best swords in the world, and I make them!" and he rapturously covered the face of his child with burning kisses.

CHAPTER II.

THE LEAGUE OF DOOM.

AT almost the same hour that Aimee D'Albert confronted her father after her exciting flight through the streets of Paris, an entirely different scene was taking place in another quarter of the city.

In a low-ceiled apartment in the Rue Jupiter—a narrow street which ended on the bank of the Seine not far from the now kingless Tuileries—nine men were apparently awaiting the coming of some personage. The lights were low and the windows of the place were heavily shuttered. Everything denoted secrecy, for those were days when men's heads rested lightly on their shoulders, for Mother Guillotine was very busy, and blood mingled with blood on the ghastly knife.

The nine men were young. There was a soberness about them that told in plain language that their meeting was no frivolous affair. They were plainly dressed, and several wore swords after the manner of the day. One of the number stood at the only door that opened into the room, and now and then he inclined his head in a listening attitude.

As the minutes wore on impatience possessed the company. They looked at one another, but did not speak. Presently a low rap was heard, and the nine started into life. The guard responded to the rappings and tapped four times on the portal. The others nodded.

A minute later the door opened, and the tenth man stepped into the apartment. He was tall and imposing in every particular. There was good blood in the newcomer's veins, as his mien showed, and upon his handsome face determination sat enthroned. After saluting those whom he found in the room, he advanced a few steps, and the nine formed a silent circle about him.

"I am a few minutes late, brethren," said he in a clear voice, "but the delay was unavoidable. I had to deceive the blood-mad canaille, for some of the vermin persisted in staying on my track. One of the monsters has fallen. The dagger of the girl from Caen has let out Marat's blood, and she is doomed. Her heroic act, for which some day she will be canonized, leaves three for our vengeance—Danton, St. Just, and Robespierre. France is bleeding at the feet of this trio of Neros, and nothing but their death can free her."

He paused, and his eagle eyes swept the circle.

"Nothing but the death of the three will save the Queen. Unless we strike she will leave her prison for the guillotine."

"Long live the Queen!" said the nine in low tones.

"Louis has fallen beneath the knife of the guillotine, which has been resharpened to drink the blood of Marie Antoinette. She must not perish by the teeth of this steel terror."

"She shall not!" went the rounds of the circle.

"That is for us to say," was the answer, and a smile illumined the pale face of the speaker.

"We can scarcely hope to free the woman from Caen," he went on. "She will be destroyed in a few hours. Even now a mob from the hated faubourgs surrounds her prison, and it is said that Robespierre is weakening under its hellish demands. Let the slayer of Marat be sacrificed. Her name and deed will become the glory of the world, and France will honor her in days to come. We meet here tonight for the settlement of our purpose. We can die but once. The knife falls but once on a neck, and as for myself, I wish I had a thousand lives to devote to freedom."

As the speaker ceased he advanced to a small table upon which stood a wooden bowl with a cover. He took from his pocket a handful of little balls which he dropped one by one into the receptacle, counting each with an almost imperceptible movement of his lips as he did so.

"Citizen patriots," said he, turning to the group, "I have deposited the spheres of doom in the bowl. There are ten of them. Three are numbered—one, two, and three. The first numeral stands for St. Just, the second for Danton, the third for Robespierre. We will each draw out a ball and those who get the numbers will know their duty. Are you ready for the ordeal, brethren?"

"We are ready," fell from the lips of all in unison.

The chief of this league of doom stepped back and placed himself at the head of his companions.

"I'll take the initiative," he said, with a fearless toss of his head.

He stepped toward the table and thrust his hand into the bowl. It remained there a moment, and when he withdrew it he placed it in his pocket and fell back. One by one the others followed his example amid tense silence, the lights flickered, and the wind sang an eerie song without.

"It is done!" said the chief in a low voice. "The die is cast, brethren. The monsters of France are doomed. Let there be no cowardice. Let the hands that strike be like steel and every heart as strong as fate itself."

No one had looked at his ball. The fate of the three monsters at the head of the Revolution rested in the pockets of three men.

Among these three, or, in other words, among the ten, was a young man known as Leon St. Cyr. Born of a well-to-do family, he had grown up in his beloved Paris. He had just turned his twenty-third year, was handsome and educated, and in physique was a perfect man. His hatred of the Terror was well known to his companions. He had sided with the King, and nothing but control over himself had kept him, so far, from the blade of the guillotine.

A few of his comrades knew that he had been enamored of Aimee D'Albert, the sword-maker's daughter, and it was no secret that she had returned his love. But for the breaking out of the Revolution they would have become man and wife, but the strides of the Terror had postponed the wedding day, and the young couple were waiting for the time when France would regain her senses and make them happy.

One by one the ten men slipped from the little room. St. Cyr was the last to leave. He thrust his hand into his pocket and fumbled the little sphere which he found there. It seemed as cold as ice to his touch, and he involuntarily tried to discover if it bore one of the fateful numbers. But it was smooth to his touch, and he let it fall from his fingers with a low sigh.

The chief of the clan, the man whom they knew only by the name of the Eaglet, had already gone, and St. Cyr followed him in silence. Outside the house the Rue Jupiter was dark. A few stars shone in the vaulted blue, and as St. Cyr looked up he breathed in low tones a prayer for his unhappy country.

A few steps away rolled the waters of the Seine. Here and there a light on the bridges dissipated the gloom and revealed the waters into which more than one unfortunate had plunged to escape the knife of Mother Guillotine.

Suddenly to his ears came the notes of the Marseillaise and the carmagnole, the singing dance of the bloodthirsty mobs, as they swept the streets of Paris in drunken bands, men and women from the slums and the faubourgs, impersonations of wanton destruction, the very fiends of hell.

St. Cyr gritted his teeth while he listened. His eyes blazed, his lips quivered, and he hissed madly under his breath:

"I hope the knife will get ye all! Would to Heaven I had the power for a night. I'd exhaust the heart of the guillotine. Yes, I'd feed every one of you to the dogs of Paris."

He turned and hastened on. Into [illegible] lighter street he sprang, and soon afterward was confronted by the open door of one of the cafes of the day. Already he could see the interior, and noticed that the place at that hour was not ver[illegible] well patronized. St. Cyr passed [illegible] threshold and found a table in a s[illegible] of darkened corner. Ordering a gla[illegible] white wine he sat down and w[illegible] for it.

At the same time he glanced [illegible] the place and noted those who [illegible] there. Time was, and not so long [illegible] when the nobility would drop in fo[illegible] little hour of pleasure. It was not [illegible] now. The guillotine had taken th[illegible] former patrons of the place, and in their stead had come a class of different hue, the people who wore little gold guillotines on their breasts, and praised the new blood-drenched Republic in their frequent toasts.

The young man sipped his wine slowly. When he had finished he heard a commotion at the door, and a crowd of men and women, nearly all of whom wore the red cap of liberty, entered the place.

St. Cyr's brows lowered. He soon became an object of observation, for he was the lone one at the table.

"I say, citizen comrade, come over and drink with us to the success of the Republic!" cried a woman of tender age, as she leaned toward him, her brilliant eyes seeming to sink deep into his own. "It is a glorious night, and they have caught the harridan who slew Citizen Marat, and we will dance the carmagnole when her head falls."

Aimee's lover cursed the woman from the depths of his soul. He had seen her somewhere and now he tried to recall time and place.

All at once the whole thing flashed across his mind. She was Cerise D'Alembert, a seeress who had foretold the Revolution and the fall of the King. Her prophecies had startled all Paris. She was a beautiful creature, with the blood of southern France in her veins, and rumor had it that she was one of the pets of Robespierre.

St. Cyr rose to his feet and told Cerise that he had not time, that he had business of importance elsewhere, and, bowing to the beauty, he left the cafe. The coal-black eyes of Cerise followed him to the door. A scowl passed over her countenance.

"I must watch that young man," she said under her breath. "No time to drink to the Republic, eh? We shall see," and she caught up her glass and shouted her toast at the top of her voice.

St. Cyr hurried to his abode. He shut the door behind him and lighted his lamp. Then diving into his pocket he brought forth the ball he had drawn. It was number three.

He had been commissioned to slay Robespierre!

CHAPTER III.

DARKENING SKIES.

CERISE D'ALEMBERT had barely reached her rather luxurious apartments in the Circle de Planquet, after her visit to the cafe, than her door was opened without the slightest sound of knocking, and one of the best known young scions of Paris stood bowing before her.

The beautiful seeress returned his salutation and leaned back in her chair. Her jeweled hand waved her visitor to a seat, and he sank into it with a half-indolent air.

In person Jean Artois was attractive. His figure was grace itself, and his deep gray eyes had captivated more than one Parisian beauty. The jewels on his fingers glistened in the soft light of Cerise's room, and his hair, powdered after the prevailing style, fell languishingly over his perfect shoulders.

"What a neck for the guillotine!" more than one observer had said of him, but the handsome dandy had thrown himself into the vortex of the Revolution and thus held back the blade.

"You look wearied," said Cerise, after a study of her caller. "Have you been leading the carmagnole tonight?"

He laughed and made a gesture with his thin white hands.

"I've been chasing a butterfly," said he, with another amused laugh. "One of those pretty moths that fly by night."

"I might have guessed as much," and Cerise laughed behind her gilded fan. "You are ever on the chase, Citizen Jean."

"But I do not always net my moth," was the reply. "She eluded me tonight."

"It must have been provoking."

"It was torture, mon ami. Why, she had the feet of a gazelle. I lost her in the Rue Victoire."

"In that quarter?" exclaimed Cerise. "And pray what sort of wings had this beautiful moth?"

"The prettiest in Paris, barring my present company," was the rejoinder. "I dared not follow her father, for I don't like the things her father makes."

The look of the woman was an interrogation.

"I will keep you in suspense no longer," Jean proceeded. "I was chasing the sword-maker's pretty daughter."

"Oho! old Bois' child?" and another laugh quivered Cerise's lips.

"I found her out tonight, and had her in my arms for a moment, but she would

TO LEDGER READERS

Be sure and read "THE SWORD-MAKER'S DAUGHTER," in this issue. It is a thrilling story of the French Revolution, and will show you what was going on during the "Reign of Terror." Look out for "THE STOOL PIGEON," next week. It is a strong story of love and mystery and the skill of "Old Fox Slavin, Detective." Also a series of funny stories called "Side Show Sidelights." Good ones. The next leader after that will be "COWMEN VERSUS SHEEPMEN; or, MISS POLLARD'S GRIT." It is a highly interesting story of a war between cattlemen and sheepmen in Bear Valley, Wyoming. There is a girl in it, and she is the real thing. Watch for it. The Ledger will publish during the coming months a lot of the finest stories ever written; stories of the sea, detective stories, love stories, sex stories, stories of ranch and mine and mountains, and stories of Wall Street and revolutions and strange mysteries. If you keep taking the Ledger you will get to read stories about almost every land and phase of life. You can't afford to not take the Ledger.

not tarry. But wait—I have her secret. I will yet catch this butterfly."

"Beware!" exclaimed the seeress, with suddenly assumed soberness. "'Tis said that she knows how to handle her father's wonderful steel. She is pretty, for I have seen her on the boulevards, as fair a kitten as ever paced them. In truth you are right there. Now, if she has a secret which you hold, there is a way to bring her round."

Jean leaned forward and his eyes sparkled with knowledge.

"She befriended Charlotte Corday," said he, looking straight at his companion, as if to note the effect of his words.

"What! befriended the slayer of Marat?" cried Cerise, almost springing from her chair. "Then she is not fit for you. She belongs to Mother Guillotine."

A sudden whiteness overspread Jean's countenance.

"All who knew this mad girl must be brought before the tribunal. Are you sure Aimee D'Albert was hand-in-glove with the woman from Caen?"

"I am not sure of anything," said Jean, thinking that he had spoken hastily. "She may have met the Corday accidentally."

"But her father, the old sword-maker, is not on the list of the Republic's friends, and Citizen Robespierre has been waiting for an opportunity to bring about his arrest."

"Oh, I care not that for the old eagle," exclaimed Jean, snapping his fingers. "It is the eaglet I want."

"I see, Monsieur Jean. Well, if the old bird is taken, the fledgling falls into your hands."

"That is true."

"The girl has no lover?"

"The pity of it is that she has."

"Then you have been forestalled. I thought you were always the first lover in your little affairs."

"Not this time," and Jean fell to biting his lips. "This man St. Cyr has caught the butterfly of the Rue Victoire, and I cast my net a little too late."

A momentary silence filled the room.

"And you have come to me for help," Cerise suddenly resumed. "You want to know how to net this moth?"

"I want her, of course," assented Jean. "But I fancy that the old sword-maker will be a hard nut to crack."

"With the Terror against him?" laughed the woman. "That is the easiest thing in the world. Why, we have gotten rid of the King; then what sort of an object will a mere sword-master be?"

The woman laid her fan on the marble-topped table and fingered her rings.

"I had a look at your rival this very night," said she. He would not drink the toast I was about to propose. He was too busy to drink to the success of the Republic."

A new light leaped up in the young man's eyes.

"Why not bring down two birds with the same stone?" he cried suggestively.

"I read your thoughts before you unleashed them, my Jean. I was about to go to Citizen Robespierre when you came in. As I have said, it is the easiest thing in the world."

"You're a wonderful woman, mon ami!" Jean cried. "It shall be a great supper in the Cafe Triomphe. Will you do this for me, Cerise?"

"I'll do anything for a friend," was the answer. "You may prepare for the wedding. We will have it in old Notre Dame, with Robespierre to give the bride away."

Jean's cheeks flushed. He rose to his feet and held out his hand to the beautiful seeress.

"But the bride will bring you no dowry save some of her father's wonderful swords——"

"Which I can give to the generals of the Republic who are going to beat back the hated Austrians."

"An excellent idea, Jean."

Five minutes later Jean Artois was on the street.

"As good as won!" he exclaimed, as the night winds touched his heated cheeks. "A wonderful woman is Cerise. How can I ever repay her? You are the child of fortune. Jean Artois," and he hastened away, threading the streets of Paris, humming one of the ditties of the blood-red Revolution.

Cerise D'Alembert made her toilet, and summoning her cabriolet was soon speeding over the stones. When she alighted it was before the dwelling of Robespierre. A light in one of the upper windows greeted her, and she sprang eagerly up the steps.

The head of the Revolution did not notice her intrusion, for he was in consultation with St. Just, but the moment her voice was heard he turned and bowed.

"It is our good angel who comes," he said, with a grimace to his companion. "Are we not a favored couple, Citizen St. Just?"

St. Just growled, for he liked not Cerise, who had prophesied that one day he should fall beneath the bloody temple he had builded. Robespierre dismissed the business in hand, and escorted Cerise to a chair, bending admiringly over her.

"And whose head does my friend ask tonight?" he queried.

Cerise promptly put on an expression of alarm.

"Does not my friend Maximilien know that all our enemies have not felt the knife? We are living on the crust of a volcano."

"Very well. Then we will break the crust and extinguish the fire before it breaks forth."

St. Just puckered his lips and was on the eve of speaking when Cerise raised her hand.

"Do not our generals need swords with which to meet the Austrians? Have we not almost depleted our armories?"

"That is true," cried Robespierre. "But where can we get the good blades we need?"

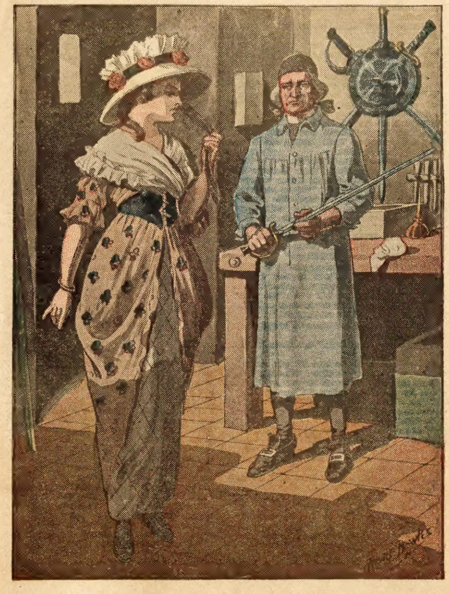
"From the armories of our foes."

At this moment St. Just swept together the papers he had brought to his colleague and arose. His sallow face was darkening again.

"If Citizen D'Alembert knows where the blades are, let her get them for the armies of the Republic," he said, meeting with interest the look the woman flashed upon him.

Cerise turned instantly to Robespierre.

"Bois D'Albert is in secret for the Queen," she went on. "I know this." She threw a hasty glance toward St. Just. "There is a conspiracy on foot to release the Widow Capet."



"What has happened, child?"

"How know you this?" growled St. Just. "Have you had another inspiration?"

"What I know I know," was the reply. "Not only this, but Leon St. Cyr is in the plot. Whoever saw him sport the gold guillotine on his bosom? When has he marched in the bands of the one and indivisible Republic?"

A thoughtful look gleamed in the eyes of Robespierre. Cerise sprang to the table and struck it with her clinched hand.

"I demand the safety of the Republic!" she exclaimed. "I, Cerise D'Alembert, demand, above all things, the safety of the men who are at its head. What are the triumphs of our armies when a shadow falls across the paths of Danton, Robespierre, and St. Just? Is not the noble Marat dead, with the dagger of a young girl in his heart? If you could look into the souls of Bois D'Albert and Leon St. Cyr you would find there glorification of Charlotte Corday. Have I come to the Republic's friends in vain? If so, let me shake the dust of Paris from my feet and pass into eternal exile."

St. Just dropped his head before these impassioned words. He knew the woman's power, knew that Robespierre was her slave, and had not the strength to refuse her anything.

"Take your victims!" he suddenly exclaimed, waving his hand toward Cerise. "I have business with the Convention," and folding his cloak about his figure he strode from the room.

"The fool!" cried the white-faced beauty. "Next thing he will want the seat of Robespierre. Kill the snake, Maximilien!"

CHAPTER IV.

LOVE AND A SWORD.

HARRIED by the attentions of Jean Artois, the sword-maker's beautiful daughter had reason to regard the future with fear.

She had repulsed him with firmness on previous occasions, and, knowing his connection with the head spirits of the Revolution, she felt that he would renew his protestations of love, and by every means in his power try to entrap her into an unwilling marriage.

Her sympathies had ever been with the unfortunate King, who had gone to the guillotine, but she had been careful not to give these sympathies undue prominence. The red teeth of the serpent of anarchy were fast destroying France, and in all the sky there was not a single cloud with a silver lining.

Another thing to worry her and still further darken the sky was St. Cyr's position. He, too, was a royalist, and she feared that he would come under the ban and have the seal of doom placed against him. She spoke of this to her father the night of her flight across the roofs of Paris, and saw a pall of fear descend upon him.

The danger was increased by the knowledge that Jean Artois had at all times the ear of Robespierre, that the door of power was ever open to him, for was he not a Revolutionist, heart and mind, and one of the foremost Jacobins?

The day following her adventure she remained at home, now and again shuddering, and then feeling that, guarded by her father's swords, she was well protected. When another night came, she opened the door to Leon, who glided into the house, taking her in his arms and imprinting the kiss of a true lover on her cheek.

She knew nothing of the League of Doom. Fate had kindly kept from her the fact that Leon had drawn the ball which had armed him for the assassin's stroke.

The young royalist passed with Aimee into the snug little room that adjoined the armory. His brow was clouded. There was lackluster in his eyes, despite her greeings, and for some moments he remained silent.

"I fear I shall have to possess a new sword," said he, suddenly breaking the stillness. "My own blade pleases me no longer, and your father makes the best blades in the world."

"Then," cried Aimee, "you shall make choice at once," and she led him into the armory, which at that moment was untenanted.

Leon cast his eyes around the sword-racks, taking in the beautiful weapons that adorned them. These were of all shapes and sharpness, blades that glittered in the lamplight, slender and impressive, just the weapons for thrust and parry, all tempered steel and as good as the famous blades of renowned Damascus.

One by one he took them from their places and tested them. Aimee's eyes glowed to behold his skill. She stood off and watched him with palpitating heart, now and then almost breaking out in admiration. Leon was not a man of strife. He was no duelist. The so-called code of honor was repulsive to him, yet he was testing the blades as if for a terrible purpose. What did it all mean?

At length Leon selected a sword and laid it upon the workbench.

"This one is my choice," said he, and at the same time he avoided her look. "It has keenness and is of the truest temper. Your father is a wonderful man."

Aimee was delighted to hear this approval of her parent's skill. Her face glowed again. Leon took his kerchief from his pocket and gently wiped the silvery steel.

"You shall not purchase the sword!" she exclaimed. "It is yours, a present from me."

"But your father——"

"Father will approve of my gift," she interrupted. "He will know that his sword has fallen into good hands."

"I promise you that it shall ever be wielded for the right," said Leon. "These are troublous times, and some day the blade may be wielded in the service of our unfortunate Queen."

"If so it must be unsheathed erelong," was the reply, for even now Marie Antoinette sits under the shadow of the knife."

"And the car of revolution rolls on," cried Leon, vehemently, "It crushes beneath its wheels the great and the good. It has deluged France with blood, and yet the monsters call for more."

"Ah," ejaculated Aimee, "if only fate would relieve us of Robespierre!"

Leon started visibly. Did Aimee know? Had she guessed his real purpose in coming to the house that night? How had she become possessed of the secret that was gnawing at his heart, eating out his vitals? Who had told her of the three balls?

The little sphere of fate, perchance of doom, still nestled in his pocket. He had not taken the courage to cast it away, evidence of the terrible step he had taken. Even then he seemed to feel it throbbing with life next his flesh.

"Who will break the tyrants' power?" suddenly resumed the girl. "Who will complete the work begun by Charlotte Corday?"

It was on his tongue to say: "I will," but he kept it back.

"There is no hope for the girl," he said instead.

"I feel that," answered Aimee. "She is to be sacrificed on the altars of her country. Those who slay tyrants will be forgiven."

He turned upon her with an expression of thankfulness. Her words were honey to his soul. If he fell in the act he had sworn to do, she would love him more. He could go to the guillotine with the lightest steps he ever took. With Robespierre for his victim, he would sleep well, and Aimee would always strew his last resting-place with flowers bedewed with her undying love. This would be reward sufficient; this would be the greatest crown a martyr ever wore.

Carefully she girded on the sword and looked with love and admiration into his eyes. So far not a word concerning her adventure. In Leon's presence she might well cease to think of Jean Artois. He was a thousand times better than this young wolf of the Revolution. He wore no guillotine on his bosom, and he never sang the hated carmagnole. To compare Leon with Jean was insulting the first pure love of her young heart. She would register no such thought in Heaven.

Leon seemed reluctant to part from her. It might be for the last time. He was not to shrink from the dreadful task assigned him. He would steel his arm for the desperate purpose, for it was for the peace of France, for the safety of her Queen and the thousands who filled the prisons waiting for the death vans that daily took their toll to the merciless blade.

"You will never forget me, love?" suddenly cried Leon, catching her up in his arms and holding her so that the light fell full upon her radiant face.

"Are you mad, Leon?" she cried. "Every night I dream of you and of the day when we shall be happy."

He kissed her again and again.

"The clouds must break away," she went on. "The blood-tide will some day cease to flow. France will recover her senses, and where the nightshade now grows there will be flowers."

"Let us hope so, Aimee."

"Let hope be coupled with prayer," was the reply. "You will come soon again?"

"If I live," and there was significance in his words. "If I live," he repeated, "I will come to claim the best woman in the world."

(Continued on page sixteen.)

Their Closet Skeletons

Or, The Wages of Sin - By Emma Howard Wight

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CHAPTER III.

SIX months later. In the lobby of his splendid villa at Cape May, Tobias Watts, millionaire, sat dozing upon a luxurious couch. He was short and fat, with an honest, weather-beaten face. He was in evening dress with huge diamond studs in his shirt front.

On the left of the lobby was a balcony overlooking the sea, glittering in the moonlight. On the right was a conservatory with rose-hued lights shining among the flowers and rare tropical plants. The doorway, opening upon a richly carpeted corridor, with handsomely frescoed wall, was draped with portieres of green velvet, looped back with heavy gold cord and tassel. On either side of the doorway were nude, life-sized marble figures of a woman, holding aloft a cluster of incandescent lights. There were couches about the lobby, upholstered in green velvet, with pillows of gold-colored silk. There were green velvet rugs scattered about the marble floor.

Tobias yawned, stretched, opened his eyes, and sat upright, with an apprehensive glance about him.

"I hope none of them thar footmen seen me a-nappin'," he murmured. "I war asleep befo' I knowed. I jest can't git used to this here frolickin' all night, nohow." He shook his head with a great sigh. "'Tain't nat'ral, fo' the good Lord guv us the night fo' restin'. I reckoned on havin' a leetle rest and quiet when I bought this here viller by the sea. But Miry's allers got the house chuck full of comp'ny, and thar's frolickin' of some kind goin' on all the time. Thar ain't no rest nor quiet 'long of this here bein' in society," and a look of utter dejection stole into his mild blue eyes.

The look changed to one of tenderness, as Augusta, looking very pretty in her ball dress of rose color, entered and came toward him.

"Why, daddy, what are you doing here all by yourself?" she asked, bending over him and slipping her arms about his neck.

"Jest takin' a leetle rest, honey, befo' the frolickin' begins," he replied.

Augusta touched her lips to the top of his bald head.

"Poor daddy!" she murmured compassionately.

"Gussie, I wouldn't like fo' yo' ma to heah me talkin' this a-way, but 'tween you and me, thar's times when I wish mightily thar never had been no coal found on the old farm," said Tobias. He glanced around a little apprehensively at Augusta to see how she took such a daring assertion. She nodded her head understandingly. "Thar's an old sayin' that you can't make a silk purse outen a sow's ear, and it's jest as true that you can't make no fine society gentleman outen an old mountaineer farmer like me." Augusta smiled, shook her head, and came and seated herself on Tobias' knee. "'Tain't no use dressin' me up in these here fine clothes, puttin' me in a fine house, chuck full of highfalutin' servants a-pesterin' the life out of me, and expect me to take to it all nat'ral."

"That is true, daddy!" Augusta agreed.

"Yo' ma 'lows I ain't got no ambition, Gussie, and I reckon she's 'bout right. I warn't made fo' no fine society gentleman and it ain't no use goin' ag'in natur'. Why, honey, do you know I've done lost all relish fo' my victuals?"

"Why, daddy!" exclaimed Augusta, sympathetically.

"It's the truth! I jest can't git up no likin' fo' these here fanciful dishes. Do you know, Gussie," lowering his voice, "I've got a pow'ful hankerin' fo a mess of cabbage, pork, and taters like we used to have down in old Virginny?"

Augusta laughed. "Oh, daddy, such a plebeian dish!"

"I wouldn't like fo' yo' ma to know 'bout it, Gussie, but it's true."

"I feel so sorry for you, dear," said Augusta, tenderly. "I wish I could do something to make you happier and more contented."

Tobias patted her hand affectionately. "God bless my leetle girl! She loves her old daddy!"

Augusta hugged him. "Indeed, I do!"

"And you won't be 'shamed of yo' old dad, honey, a'rter you married to that thar Lord Elton?" He looked at her with great wistfulness.

"Well, I reckon not!" declared Augusta. "The very idea of your even hinting at such a thing, daddy," reproachfully.

"Thar, honey, 'course I knowed better. Gussie, yo' ma's pow'ful tickled over yo' goin' to marry Lord Elton, but I ain't noways sot up over it. I ain't got no hankerin' over havin' no lord in my fambly. I'd ruther you war goin' to marry John Beeler down in old Virginny." Augusta started a little, her head drooped, and she played nervously with her fan. "John Beeler ain't no fine society gentleman; he's jest a plain country lad who arns his bread by the sweat of his brow and leads a clean, honest life." He paused thoughtfully a moment. "But I reckon that's the best kind of a gentleman, arter all."

"Daddy, what's started you thinking of John Beeler?" asked Augusta, in a low voice.

"Why, honey, I often studies 'bout the folks down in old Virginny," replied Tobias. "But I don't often speak of 'em, fo' Miry don't want me to talk 'bout the time when we war po' folks and lived on the farm."

"We are not ashamed of it, are we, daddy?"

"No, honey, I am mo' 'shamed of settin' up fo' to be what the good Lord never intended me."

Mrs. Watts, very gorgeously attired, wearing a profusion of jewels, came into the lobby accompanied by a footman, in elaborate livery, carrying a bouquet of choice hothouse flowers. Augusta sprang up from her father's knee, and they both were, for the moment, confused, under the disapproving look bestowed upon them by Mrs. Watts.

She turned to the footman.

"Hunter, give them thar flowers to Miss Watts." As the footman obeyed, she added complacently, "From his lordship, Gussie!" Augusta took the flowers indifferently. The footman withdrew, and Mrs. Watts gave vent to her displeasure. "Hunter seen you settin' on yo' pa's lap, Gussie. That ain't no way fo' you to be a-doin'. Folks in society don't do them kind of things."

"Now, Miry, that's whar you're wrong," declared Tobias. "I war readin' in the papers only a few days ago whar a man got a divorce from his wife 'cause he caught her settin' on another man's lap. And they war tiptop society folks."

Augusta buried her face in her flowers to conceal a smile.

"Oh, that's different!" exclaimed Mrs. Watts.

"Well, now, I reckon it am kinder different," said Tobias, thoughtfully. "Miry, ain't it 'lowable in society fo' a child to show affection fo' her father?"

"Mrs. Graham says it ain't good form to be a-showin' of yo' feelin's," replied Mrs. Watts.

"I don't know what good form be," declared Tobias. "But 't'would be a sor'ful day fo' old Tobias Watts when his leetle girl war 'shamed to let folks know that she loved her daddy."

Augusta went up to him and kissed him.

"That day will never come, daddy," she assured him.

"Here's Mrs. Graham!" exclaimed Mrs. Watts, effusively.

"My dear Augusta, what superb flowers!" said Mrs. Graham, as she came forward.

"From his lordship, Mrs. Graham!" unctuously explained Mrs. Watts.

"So I inferred," smiled Mrs. Graham.

"It do seem quar to me fo' folks to be a-sendin' Gussie flowers with that thar observatory chuck full of 'em," remarked Tobias.

Mrs. Watts lifted her hands in horror.

"Mrs. Graham, will you jest listen to Tobias a-showin' of his ignorance!" she exclaimed.

"Dear Mr. Watts is so delightfully original," said Mrs. Graham, smiling upon Tobias.

"I don't know what that be, ma'am," declared Tobias, "but Miry's right—I am ignorant! You can't expect an old mountaineer farmer like me to know anything 'bout the ways of fine society folks. Now, put me behind the plow——"

"Tobias!" cried Mrs. Watts, in an awful voice.

"All right, Miry," said Tobias, meekly. "I ain't goin' to say no mo'."

Mrs. Graham turned to Mrs. Watts.

"I am charmed to hear of Augusta's engagement to Lord Herbert Elton, my dear Mrs. Watts."

"Yes, Lord Herbert Elton's done proposed to Gussie and she's accepted of him," explained Mrs. Watts, with great complacency. "They be engaged. And it's all 'long of you, Mrs. Graham. We never would a-knowed his lordship if it warn't for you."

"Well, perhaps, I am a wee bit responsible," admitted Mrs. Graham.

Tobias arose.

"As I war tellin' Gussie," he said, "I ain't got no hankerin' arter havin' no lord in my fambly. I ain't noways sot up over it as Miry is. Now if it war John Beeler down in Virginny——"

"You come along with me, Tobias," said Mrs. Watts, taking his arm as she spoke. "The folks is beginnin' to arrive." As they went toward the doorway she continued, "Mrs. Graham knows you ain't got no ambition, Tobias, but don't you be a-talkin' like that to other folks."

"All right, Miry!" meekly from Tobias, as they passed out.

Augusta looked after them with a wistful smile.

"Poor, poor daddy!" she murmured. As she turned and met Mrs. Graham's eyes, she tossed her flowers petulantly upon a couch. "What a farce it all is!" she exclaimed. "The fine society people who come here tonight will ridicule us tomorrow."

Mrs. Graham shrugged her shoulders. "Few persons in this world escape criticism," she observed.

"There is a great difference between ridicule and criticism," declared Augusta.

"The dividing line is sometimes very slight," declared Mrs. Graham.

"I'll tell you what I call ridicule." Augusta turned and looked Mrs. Graham steadily in the eyes. "That article which appeared in the Society Review some months ago, called 'The Social Ambition of the Newly-Rich.'" Mrs. Graham's eyes wavered and fell. "It was written by the woman who writes under the pen-name of 'Telltale.'"

"How do you know that those articles are written by a woman?" asked Mrs. Graham.

"Because they are so cruel and malicious."

Mrs. Graham shrugged her shoulders deprecatingly.

"Are cruelty and maliciousness peculiar to—women?"

"There are certain kinds of cruelty and maliciousness that are peculiar to women," replied Augusta. "That article was—pitiless." She paused a moment. Mrs. Graham studied her furtively. "It made me wish myself back on the old farm. The people in the mountains are ignorant, uncultured, unrefined, but they are kind and honest and true. That is more than can be said of—society people."

"You are rather severe in your judgment," remarked Mrs. Graham, with a touch of irony. "If you fancy that you have a grievance against society," she continued smilingly, "you have it in your power to retaliate after you are married to Lord Herbert Elton. Society will fawn upon you when you are Lady Elton."

Augusta took up her flowers and moved away.

"I am not sure that its fawning will be any more to my liking than its ridicule or—tolerance," she said.

Mrs. Graham looked after her vindictively.

"I detest that girl!" she murmured. "She is intolerable!"

She dropped upon a couch and sat in thought, an odd look on her face, a look that none of the gay butterfly world to which she belonged ever saw. "Malicious, pitiless, cruel!" The words rang in her ears.

A rather heavily built man, clean-shaven, English in appearance, with fine brown eyes and chestnut hair, came into the lobby. The somber look left Mrs. Graham's face. She sat up, smiling.

"Good evening, Lord Elton!" she said.

Lord Herbert Elton came forward, bowing.

"Good evening, Mrs. Graham! Mrs. Watts told me that I would find Miss Watts here."

"She was here a moment ago," Mrs. Graham explained. She glanced up at him smilingly. "I want to congratulate you upon your engagement, Lord Elton."

He bowed. "Thank you!"

"Augusta Watts is a dear girl!" continued Mrs. Graham. Again Lord Elton bowed. His face was expressionless. "I am devoted to her! You know I have always taken a great interest in the Wattses. They are such fine people!"

"Yes," murmured Lord Elton, abstractedly. He turned suddenly toward Mrs. Graham with an animation that was almost eagerness in his manner. "There is such a beautiful girl here tonight, Mrs. Graham, the most perfect type of blonde beauty I think I have ever seen." He paused a moment. Mrs. Graham looked at him with a half-smile. "She has the most wonderful yellow hair. Can you tell me who she is?" eagerly.

"Is she very modestly gowned all in white, and does she carry white and pink carnations?" queried Mrs. Graham.

"Yes, and she wears a very handsome pearl necklace, her only ornament."

"How closely he must have observed her," thought Mrs. Graham, amused. Aloud, she said, "She is Mrs. Serle!"

Lord Elton started and looked quickly at Mrs. Graham.

"Do you mean that she is married—and to—Paul Serle?" he exclaimed.

Mrs. Graham nodded.

"Yes. The marriage was quite romantic," she went on, with a rather sharp glance at Lord Elton. There could be no question as to his interest. "Mrs. Serle was educated in a convent. She thought she wanted to become a nun. She came to visit Mrs. Kennard. Mr. Serle succeeded in convincing her that matrimony was really her vocation in life." She arose with a laugh. "Will you take me to the ballroom, please?"

Lord Elton offered his arm. No more was said about Mrs. Serle. But Mrs. Graham was well aware of the fact that Lord Herbert Elton, the fiance of Augusta Watts, was wonderfully attracted by the blonde loveliness of Paul Serle's young wife.

CHAPTER IV.

TOBIAS and Lilian Serle stopped at the entrance to the conservatory. "Gussie said as you wanted to see the flowers," said Tobias.

"Yes," replied Lilian. "Miss Watts was telling me that you have such lovely roses."

"Yes, this heah observatory be chuck full of all kinds of flowers," declared Tobias. He looked at the fair, lovely face with a frank appreciation of its beauty. "Be you fond of roses?" he asked gently.

She smiled.

"Oh, yes, I love them!" she replied.

"You jest ought to see the roses growin' wild on the mountains down in old Virginny," declared Tobias. "To my mind the roses what bloom as the good Lord intended fo' them to bloom in the open air and the sunshine of heaven are sweeter and purtier than them what's forced and tended."

Lilian nodded her head understandingly.

"I would like to see the roses growing wild on the mountains down in Virginia," she said.

Tobias looked pleased.

"Would you, sho' 'nough?" he exclaimed. "I wouldn't reckon as a fine society lady like you would care 'bout wild mountain roses."

Lilian smiled with a touch of pathos.

"I am not a fine society lady," she said quietly.

Tobias observed her attentively for a moment before he spoke.

"Well, now, you do look kinder different to these heah society ladies," he declared. "Did I understand Gussie to say that you war Mrs. Serle?"

"Yes," the word came almost like a sigh.

"Well, now, you do look mighty young to be married!" declared Tobias.

"I am eighteen!"

"Well, now, Miry warn't that old when her and me war married," declared Tobias. He continued reminiscently: "You wouldn't think, seeing us now," with a wave of his hand that took in the beautiful, sumptuous lobby, "that Miry and me began our married life in a two-room cabin. And we war as happy as the day war long." He gave a glance about him and a sigh left his lips. "I wouldn't like fo' Miry to heah me talkin' to you this a-way he added. "She don't like fo' me to say nothin' 'bout the time when we war po' folks. Shall we go and see the flowers?"

As they passed into the conservatory Serle and Mrs. Sherrard entered the lobby. The latter was looking particularly handsome in a very tight and very low cut gown of orange-colored chiffon over black satin. A cluster of red roses made a crimson stain against one bare white shoulder. She wore a ruby star in her hair and about her throat a necklace of rubies linked together with diamonds. Louise Sherrard was rather given to bizarre effects, but they were always becoming.

"Your wife is very lovely, Paul!" she said, as they paused near the entrance to the balcony.

"Thanks!" he murmured coolly. "You are very kind!" There was a touch of irony in his drawling tone.

She looked at him with amused eyes. "Doesn't it please you to be told that your wife is lovely?" she asked.

"It doesn't inspire me with rapture to be told so from—you," he replied. He looked at her with a cynical smile as he added, "Permit me to congratulate you upon your admirable philosophy."

She shrugged her shoulders. "Did you expect me to die of a broken heart?" she asked. She laughed a little bitterly. "What unreasonable creatures you men are! If we make you scenes, reproach you, nurse a grievance, you are wearied, disgusted, bored. If we accept the situation philosophically—if you will—you are piqued."

He laughed and bent over her. "You are looking particularly charming this evening!" he murmured.

"Thanks! You are very good!"

They both laughed. The woman was thinking how easy it was to delude a man if one has the strength of will and the fortitude. He had never so much as guessed what she had suffered.

"Come out upon the balcony," said Serle.

She hesitated. It did not seem to her that it would be wise.

"Come!" he whispered.

She took his arm and let him lead her out upon the balcony.

Charles Sherrard and Lord Herbert Elton came into the lobby. They exchanged a few commonplaces, and Lord Elton passed into the conservatory. Sherrard sat down upon a couch, a very thoughtful look on his face.

Fifteen years before he had been engaged to Elizabeth Merton, a handsome girl, with a fresh complexion and a fine figure. He had deemed it expedient to break the engagement, and Elizabeth Merton had married Michael Caxley, who had made a big fortune by the sale of Caxley's Magic Salve. Caxley had died about a year previous, and Mrs. Caxley was one of the guests at the Watts ball. Sherrard found her greatly changed, as he thoughtfully observed her without letting her know of his presence. She had grown fat and her skin was mottled. But she was very rich—Caxley had left millions. She had been very fond of him, Sherrard, and some women had a wonderful capacity for fidelity. It was possible that she still cherished a tender remembrance of her first love. If he were only free! Why should he not be free? A look not pleasant to see passed over his face. If he were but sure that Elizabeth Caxley still cared for him.

He arose to his feet with a determined look on his face.

"I shall find out!" he murmured.

CHAPTER V.

SHERRARD sought Mrs. Caxley in the ballroom. She was surprised to see him, but there was no mistaking the pleasure that beamed in her eyes. He got her away to one of the small anterooms adjoining the ballroom. They sat down upon a couch and he took her hand, a very chubby one, ablaze with diamonds, in his.

"Will you say that you are a little glad to see me?" he asked softly.

"Why, of course, I am glad to see an old friend like you, Mr. Sherrard," replied the widow, withdrawing her hand with a little conscious laugh.

"Mr. Sherrard! It used to be—Charlie!" he exclaimed reproachfully.

"Oh, but that was years ago, before either of us was married," declared Mrs. Caxley.

"True!" assented Sherrard. "Ah, those days of unalloyed happiness!" and he sighed profoundly.

Mrs. Caxley, suddenly awakening to the fact that they were treading on dangerous ground, hastened to change the subject by inquiring:

"How is Mrs. Sherrard? Well, I hope?"

"Thank you, I believe she is well," Sherrard answered, with admirably assumed constraint.

"I have heard that his married life was very unhappy, poor, poor fellow!" Mrs. Caxley was thinking.

Their eyes met; hers fell.

"Lizzie, you spoiled my life. Why did you send me away?" he murmured.

"But I didn't!" she protested. "It was you who broke the engagement."

"I loved you too dearly to doom you to a life of poverty," he hastened to add. "And you married—another!"

"And so did—you."

"It mattered little what I did with my life after I lost you," he declared. "You are the only woman I have ever loved. I shall love you till I die. I have been terribly punished for not remaining true to the dear memory of that love. If you knew all you would at least pity me."

"I do pity you—if you are unhappy!"

"Lizzie, you once loved me." He leaned toward her eagerly. "Is that love quite dead?"

"You—you must not ask me—that," she faltered. "You forget that you are not—free."

"But if I were—free?" with suppressed eagerness.

She looked down.

"Then I would answer your question," she answered, in a very low voice.

Sherrard had learned all that he desired.

A little later he returned to the lobby in search of his wife. She had just come into the balcony with Serle.

"I wish to speak to you," he said, ignoring Serle with studied insolence.

Louise gave him a swift glance. Serle bowed to Louise and went out. She looked again at Sherrard.

"What do you want?" she asked. There was a look upon his face that set her heart to beating with an undefined dread.

"I want to tell you that I am leaving this place tonight, immediately," he replied.

"Leaving here tonight, immediately?" she repeated. "Why this sudden change of plan? We were to have remained until the end of the week."

"I said nothing about your leaving. You and your brat can remain as long as you please," he replied brutally.

"What do you mean?" she asked tensely.

"That I intend applying for a divorce." She started and gasped. "Naming Serle as co-respondent," he added.

For just a moment she cowered, then she sprang erect, leaped across the space between them, and with her face close to his, glared into his eyes.

"You hound!" she cried. "You unspeakable hound!"

Sherrard laughed.

CHAPTER VI.

LOUISE SHERRARD stood rigid, staring straight before her. Sherrard had left her, but she was hardly aware of it.

"Oh, God!" she whispered. "Oh, God!"

Tobias entered from the conservatory, leaving Lilian with Lord Elton. Louise turned, forcing a smile to her stiff lips.

"I've just been admiring the view from the balcony, Mr. Watts!" she said, going toward him. "It's superb!"

"The sea be one of the Almighty's masterpieces!" declared Tobias. "But to my mind thar ain't nothin' as kin ekal the mountains."

"Down in old Virginia," said Louise, and her light laugh floated back to Lilian and Lord Elton as they came out of the conservatory.

"That was Mrs. Sherrard, was it not?" asked Lilian.

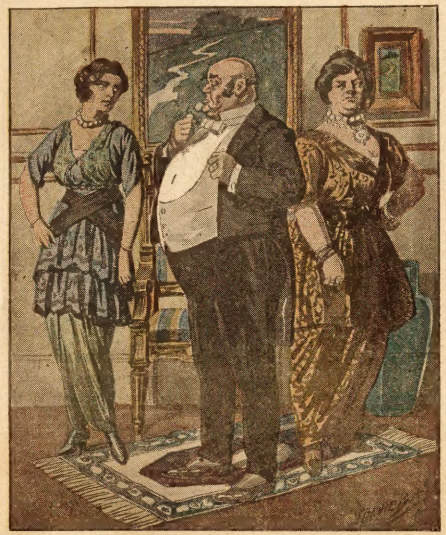
"Yes," replied Lord Elton. He gave her a quick glance, but there was no mistaking the perfect innocence of the lovely face.

"She is a great friend of my husband's," added Lilian.

"Poor child!" Lord Elton was thinking, with a thrill of some feeling that was deeper, tenderer than pity. "She is as innocent as she is beautiful. How long will she remain unspotted from the world? Will you honor me with a dance?" he asked.

"I do not dance," she replied coldly.

"I am very sorry," he declared, with great sincerity. "But you will soon acquire the art."



"Now, put me behind a plow!"

She looked at him as though his words displeased her.

"I have no wish to learn. I am a Catholic, and my church forbids such dances as are danced—here. Please do not let me detain you. No doubt you are engaged for this dance."

He was engaged for it and had no excuse to linger. Lilian declined to return to the ballroom. As Lord Elton went away from her reluctantly, he was asking himself if the lovely young wife of Paul Serle had bewitched him.

Lilian looked around her wearily and sighed.

"I feel so alone in the midst of all these people," she murmured plaintively. "I suppose it's because I have so little in common with them. Paul says I am a prude because I will not dress as the women are dressed here tonight. It makes me ashamed to see them." She arose and went toward the balcony. "Paul told me that the world was full of joy and so beautiful." She looked out upon the sea, glittering in the moonlight. "God's world is beautiful!" she murmured softly.

A pretty little boy, with pink cheeks and long gold-brown curls, beautifully dressed in blue velvet with wide lace collar, came running into the lobby. He stopped and looked about him.

Lilian looked at him admiringly.

"What a dear little boy!" she thought.

"Oh, he isn't here!" exclaimed the boy, with an air of disappointment.

"Are you looking for someone?" asked Lilian, approaching him.

"Yes, I am looking for my dear Paul," was the reply.

"Oh!" exclaimed Lilian. "Aren't you Mrs. Sherrard's little boy?"

"Yes, she's my mamma! My name's Freddy Sherrard."

Lilian sat down upon a couch and drew Freddy to her.

"You are such a dear little boy, Freddy!" She kissed him.

Freddy looked at her admiringly. His eyes were very dark, and reminded her of other eyes she had seen, but could not at the moment place.

"You are a beautiful lady!" he declared. "I like you! Do you know my dear Paul?"

Lilian smiled.

"Yes, I am his wife!"

Freddy frowned and drew away from her.

"Oh, then I don't like you!" he exclaimed.

"Why, Freddy?"

"Nannie, my nurse, says that my dear Paul don't come to see mamma and me any more 'cause his wife won't let him."

Lilian smiled.

"That isn't true," she declared. "I would be glad for my husband to go to see such a dear little boy as you."

Freddy regarded her questioningly for a moment, then he nestled against her.

"I believe you! You don't look like you would tell a story. I runned away from Nannie," he explained gleefully. "Will you find my dear Paul for me?"

"Yes," replied Lilian, "we'll go look for him."

"Maybe he's here in the lobby!" said a voice outside.

"Here comes Nannie, looking for me!" said Freddy.

"We'll hide from her!" cried Lilian.

She caught Freddy's hand and ran laughingly with him to the entrance of the conservatory where they concealed themselves behind a huge palm.

Freddy's nurse entered, followed by a stylish maid.

"He ain't here!" exclaimed the former, disgustedly. "Bother that child!"

"Why did he run away?" asked the maid.

"To find Mr. Serle, I suppose. He's awful fond of Mr. Serle."

The maid laughed. "I suppose that's natural!"

"Why, whatever do you mean, Mary?" asked Nannie, with an air of innocence.

"Pshaw! what's the use of pretending you don't know, Nannie? It's been the talk for years about Mrs. Sherrard and Mr. Serle. And Freddy's enough like him to be his child."

"Do hush, Mary! Some one might hear you!"

"I guess they wouldn't hear any more than they've heard before," exclaimed Mary, with a toss of her head.

"Come along! I've got to find that child!" said Nannie, and they went out.

"They've gone!" exclaimed Freddy, gleefully, as he ran out from behind the palm.

Lilian followed him slowly. She was very pale.

"Wasn't it fun, hiding from Nannie?" said Freddy, running to her.

She shivered as he lifted his eyes to her face. She pushed him from her with a gesture of repulsion.

"Go! go to your nurse!" she said.

He stared at her in astonishment.

"Have I been naughty?" he asked. "Please don't be angry with me! I didn't mean to be!"

She turned from him with a shudder.

"Go!" she said pitilessly. "Go at once!"

Freddy's small fair face flushed scarlet. He forced back the tears that rushed to his eyes, lifted his curly head proudly, and went out.

"Lilian, you must have a penchant for solitude!" exclaimed Serle, coming out into the lobby a little later.

She arose from the couch on which she was seated and faced him.

"Are you the father of Mrs. Sherrard's child?" she asked, with disconcerting abruptness.

"Certainly not!" replied Serle, promptly.

She looked at him steadily, her eyes black under her yellow hair.

"Are you telling the truth, or—lying like a gentleman?" she asked.

Serle stifled an oath.

"Who has been talking to you about Mrs. Sherrard and myself?" he asked. She told him. "Mere servants' gossip!" he added contemptuously.

"It seems that they only repeated what had been the talk for years," she declared. "But that is not all! I have seen for myself how much that woman's child resembles you."

He shrugged his shoulders. "Imagination on your part!"

"No! Your sin and that woman's is written in the face of—your child!"

The color arose darkly in Serle's face.

"With my past life you have absolutely no concern!" he exclaimed. "I have made you my wife, I intrusted you with the honor of my name."

"The honor of your name!" She spoke with such exceeding contempt, such scathing irony, that Serle regarded her in astonishment, while he wondered if with his consummate knowledge of women he had failed to understand the young, unsophisticated girl he had made his wife. He was destined to learn later how signally he had failed to fathom her. "A man who steals another man's wife has no honor!"

"You take an exaggerated view of these matters because you are very young and very ignorant—of the world," said Serle. "You good women are the most unreasonable, the most exasperating on earth! You look as pale and horrified, Lilian, as though I had been guilty of murder," and he laughed.

"The crime you have committed is as great, as deadly as murder. God who said, 'Thou shalt not kill,' also said, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.'"

This strange story leads to very extraordinary situations and dramatic episodes. The reader will find it eminently worth reading to the end. Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of it. The surest way to get the Ledger is to subscribe for it and have it come to your home regularly. Today is a good time to attend to this.

* * *

Managing Father.

"You know, dear," said the young man nervously to the pretty girl, "I'm really frightened about speaking to your father, he's so awfully sure of himself, you know."

"Is that all that's causing the delay?" inquired the modern miss, dryly. "If that's so, just leave it to me. I'll manage father."

Accordingly next morning she approached pater-familias as he potted plants to the accompaniment of a choice Havana and carpet slippers.

"Papa," she gurgled, with feigned mirth, as she took his arm, "what do you think? That young fool Perkins has proposed to me! Just fancy!" And the lady doubled up in incoherent joy.

But papa shook himself free and tugged with the fury of a baited bull as he stormed:

"What! Refused young Perkins—that estimable young man? Why, I'm ashamed of you! You modern girls never know when you're lucky! You'll make it up with him at once—at once, I say—and don't let me have any nonsense!"

And papa never knew the reason for the peals of laughter which issued from the drawingroom that same evening, when Edwin Perkins ecstatically greeted the dainty Clara.

* * *

Would Not Be Long.

Mark Twain, about the time that he was working hard upon one of the earliest books that brought him fame, sailed for a tour of Europe with his family.

He kept up his writing on shipboard, and only left it at intervals for brief recreation.

One day an approaching storm drove him inside the cabin, and he went back to work, leaving word with his daughter, then a very little girl, to explain his absence.

"If they ask for me," he said to her, "say that I won't be long—I am only going to write an anecdote."

A little later the child was accosted by a passenger.

"Where has your father gone?" was the inquiry.

"He won't be long," lisped the child. "He saith he ith only going to ride a nannygoat."

Captain Kidd's Return

Or, The Iceberg's Gift - By William H. Manning

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CHAPTER X.

SEA PERILS.

TINKER told his story more in detail with the party gathered around the capstan. The more he talked the better his new friends liked him. He had a pleasant, modest way, and his sincerity was not to be questioned.

"The brigantine made heavy weather of it as soon as we struck the latitude of the Cape," he explained. "Captain Rose was a good sailor, and he handled her well, but the poor old Spare Sail was badly battered by the vaulting seas. She was only saved by capital seamanship, but something bad came of things.

"Captain Rose, worn out by being so much on deck, was cast against the bulwark when the brigantine lurched very heavy, and he never got over it. His head was hurt.

"When we pulled clear of the Navarin and Staten Island there seemed to be nothing to do but poke her nose into the north and run for the Falklands, but the Old Man, he said there was a gale raging up there, and he held our course east.

"After that—well, I don't know. Fog settled around us again, and all we knew of our course was guesswork. The Captain wouldn't tell us. Three days that thing held, and though we sometimes had the idea we was sailing right south'ard into the polar regions, we held our peace.

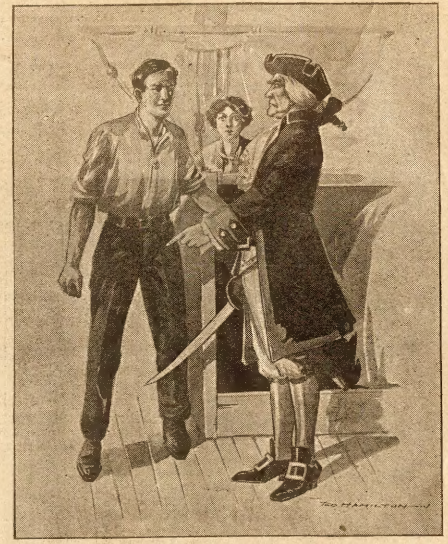
"We had seen that the Cap'n acted funny, and that he rubbed his head a whole lot, but how bad he was we didn't know until he began to give orders that was little less than wild. Then, one night, the poor crazy man disappeared—jumped overboard, ye see—and we was left alone in the fog without any good navigator, the mate being only fair to middling.

"Two hours after we missed the Old Man we drove right into a drifting iceberg, and the hull of the brigantine was crushed like an eggshell. She stuck, and we looked things over to see how we stood. The mate took an observation when the sun came out and made us far south, 'way out of the road of the merchant ships, and the poor old Spare Sail had a hole in her bottom big as a stateroom.

"Well, it was while we was hanging in the wind as to a plan and the sea running hard from the south'ard, a berg came drifting along with this here old-fashioned hooker setting on its long, low front foot, which was like a table.

"Oh! we thought we had gone crazy when we seen her. It was not that she was dismasted and almost clean gone above decks, but her type—nobody could say whether she was ship, schooner, frigate, or something else. Such a hull! We knew she was very old, and we wondered right smart.

"When we first saw her there was tolerable firm ice under her, but it thinned and crumbled, and we saw she would soon be afloat. And, mate, the same warmth that was crumbling that berg was doing ditto to the one we had grounded on, and it was clear we should go to smash if we stayed where we were.



"Go, or you are a dead man!"

"The mate and the carpenter managed to get on board o' her, and after two hours they come back and reported that her hull was like weathered oak for firmness, and they had the plan of transshipping our masts, yards, spars, and the like, and patching her up with what we had that was all right.

"Right there our foreign sailors mutinied. Being full of superstition they was deathly scared of the ancient vessel, and though we told them she was simply an old craft that had long been frozen into the ice, they declared she was an unnatural thing, a craft smitten with a curse, and so on, and they refused to board her, and demanded that we take to our boats and trust our lives to the sea.

"High words follered, two men fought, and the upshot of it was that the foreigners took one of the brigantine's boats and put away, nobody saying them no. We were well rid of them.

"Well, we carried out our plan. We got our standing-rigging from the Spare Sail to this hooker, together with a lot of provisions, water, cooking things, planks, boards, and the like, and set to work patching up.

"Before we were done, both ships went adrift as the ice melted, but while this ship floated safe, the poor old brigantine took in the sea with a rush and sank in many fathoms.

"To cut it short, we stepped our masts, sent up the yards and blocks, laid a new deck, and generally fixed this hulker fit for service. It was while we were still short of having her in full trim, the sails being in a raffle on deck, that our great misfortune happened.

"One of the hands sighted a little floe, half a mile off, with something on it that moved, something dark. We looked, and there was a division of opinion as to whether it was a seal or a man, but our mate didn't want to take chances. The boat was lowered, and all but me got into her and pulled away.

"I've told you before that I seen that boat overturn. Whether she hit an under-water berg or was struck by a swimming animal I don't know, but over she went, and never one of my mates have I seen since. All drowned, poor souls!

"And the worst of it was that pretty soon I see that creature they had gone out to rescue take a pretty header and go into the water. It was only a seal, after all. And my mates were drowned!"

The narrator paused and brushed a hand hurriedly across his eyes. It did not need his trembling voice to explain why he did it.

"I was left here alone, and I tell you I felt pretty helpless. How was I to make sail alone and get out of these waters?

"Things were this way when, at last, I heard somebody on deck when I was below. I was scared, thinking them foreign mutineers had come around by chance, and I hid in the hold among the ballast. Maybe I ain't much shakes as a hero, but I stayed right there until I got so mighty hungry that my stomach told my brain the rest of me was a fool. I came out, and found you were not the mutineers. That's all."

This story had been listened to with keen interest, but all the while Ralston and Captain Mary were eager to ask questions along other lines. When Tinker concluded Mary expressed her sympathy in well-chosen, sincere words, and, this done, proceeded with her catechism.

"You say you were the only man aboard until we came?"

"Yes, miss."

"Are you sure of that?"

"Why, yes. My mates were dead, and as I'd been all over the old hooker I knew nobody else was here."

"Were you in the cabin much?"

"A deal of time."

"Did you count the staterooms?"

"Eh?—Did I—why, no, I can't say I counted them."

"You didn't see any secret room?"

"I certain didn't," said Tinker, puzzled.

"Nor hear anything?"

"Not a sound but the water lapping outside, and the thud of small bits of drifting ice, and the cries of seabirds overhead."

"Now," the girl pursued judicially, "go back to the time when you first saw this vessel. How long did she seem to have been afloat since the ice set her partly free?"

"We didn't agree exactly, but, partly by her looks and partly by the time when that spell of warm weather began, we argued she had been uncovered fully for nigh a week, or say five days. The mate had a good eye, and he said she had formerly been covered over complete, being wrapped in the ice of the big berg as the yolk of an egg is inside its shell."

"And an unsual warm spell set the berg adrift and uncovered her?"

"Split the berg in two, we believed. Also, melted away all ice above her and gradually lowered her so she finally went into the sea like a fish."

"How dry was her deck?"

"Quite dry, considering that it was a bit decayed. Must have had three or four days sun onto it."

"Were the hatches closed?"

"Yes."

"Battened down?"

"That's what I can't say. Remember, I told you I was not among them who first visited her."

"But," and Captain Mary showed great disappointment, "didn't you hear anybody say as to that?"

"No. To be exact, I only know the hatches were closed because there was no ice below and no real wet. Her bulwarks were so badly breached that water could run free from her deck to the sea, but some would have got below if there had been open hatches. It's queer, though, that when I went aboard I saw no tarpaulins and no battens."

"I can't explain that," she went on in a clear, decided voice, "but I am sure your mates did not have the task of unbattening. Somebody else was ahead of you in the ship."

"Eh? You don't say!" exclaimed Tinker, surprised. "Who was it?"

"That I can't tell. Probably a shipwrecked man like yourself, but surely someone was on the ice in the far regions, and all alone. He tore away the battens, went below and he's there now."

"He is? Well, well?"

Ralston was smiling faintly. Mary, disappointed in her first idea that the mysterious man was one of the number who repaired the Royal Hope, was still resolved to make the so-called Captain Kidd a modern man and a humbug.

"Are you sure you saw no other ship near where the Spare Sail foundered?" she resumed.

"Why, certain, miss."

Mary turned to Ralston.

"You see how it is, don't you?" she asked.

"I wish I did," he replied.

"There was another wreck, and the lone survivor preceded Mr. Tinker and his mates to this ship——"

"But we went all over this hooker, time and again," argued Tinker, "and nobody was here. No living man."

"You shall see him tomorrow," she said composedly. "That secret room baffled you, simply because you were too busy to take time to notice the lost space. Ordinarily, you would have noticed at once."

"A man here! Well, that's mighty queer. I'll be glad to meet him."

"It will be interesting," said Ralston dryly, "to see just how glad you'll be."

CHAPTER XI.

THE DISCOVERY.

IN THE morning all hand were at breakfast together. Tinker had established his reputation as a desirable addition to their party by his manners, honest face, and conversation, and as he was a good common sailor—though not yet an "able" seaman—it was felt that he cast a good deal of light on the plans for getting the Royal Hope under way.

No sound had been heard from the secret stateroom, and Ralston was guilty of fervent wish that its inmate might have died in his berth, but as their forks began to rattle on the dishes he was undeceived.

The door opened, and the self-styled Captain Kidd stood looking at them. He was not then the same urbane man they had seen before. He scowled, and his keen, intelligent eyes were sparkling with angry light.

"Why," he demanded sharply, "was I not summoned to breakfast? Be ye men who begrudge a fellow mariner food?"

He looked at Ralston, and that young man undertook to answer.

"We heard no sound from your quarter, and supposed you still asleep."

"And how long," was the sarcastic addition, "do you think me capable of sleeping?"

"No man here is under strict discipline, and a guest shall not be worried by demands upon his strength. Your food would have waited your convenience."

It was a pacific reply, for Ralston saw that a quarrel with the man was not judicious, but Kidd was not appeased by fair words.

"Nonsense!" he exclaimed. "I am a mariner like the rest of ye, and not a man needful of coddling. Odd's my life, sir, but I am as strong as any of ye. Coddling! How old do you take me to be?"

He looked less than sixty, but Ralston choked back a momentary impulse to reply, "Two hundred and fifty years."

"I demand an apology!" Kidd went on fiercely. "Long years have I sailed the

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seas, and never a man hath been hungry at my table. Sir, your conduct is infamous. I demand an apology!"

Mary had been looking at him, trying to bore into his history with her bright eyes and get confirmation of her belief that he was a modern man, but chiefly she was concerned to prevent ill feeling. Whatever the man before them was, he had high, dangerous passions, and she felt that he must me mollified.

"Sir," she said, like one regretful, "I beg that I may offer the apology. I confess that I am to blame, having given injudicious advice. I am fond of sleep, and I advised that you be not disturbed. As this gentleman has inimated a guest is sacred. If I erred, be it for me to apologize."

The fierce eyes were turned upon her. They studied, and then the passion slowly died out of the strong face. He bowed slightly.

"Perhaps I was hasty," he returned quietly. "Your sex are much given to honest speech, and not a little to sound reason. Prithee, madam, do not think me churl enough to take offense where none hath been offered. Forget it! Madam, your servant. Sirs, I give you all good morning."

Again he bowed, and the threatened storm was lulled, but he had given an inkling of what he might do if his imperious temper was crossed. Captain Kidd had long been a sea commander, accustomed to rule those around him, and this man was not to be made insignificant. The latter fact was clear to Ralston, and the incident helped to fortify him in a fixed opinion.

The man was Captain Kidd, returned to life, a man born more than two and a half centuries before. His own claim and the evidence proved it. Never before had modern man had so strange a shipmate.

The old pirate sat and ate, and his appetite was good, but he had little to say. He listened closely, however, and it was a reasonable surmise that he was trying to catch words that would interest him, but conversation was commonplace.

When the meal was finished the three men who now formed the crew went on deck. Their thoughts were fixed on getting the sails in place and having the Royal Hope under way before she was struck by a gale. Her ability to withstand harsh weather was not certain.

Half an hour later, as they were hauling at the ropes and hoisting the sails, Kidd appeared. He came up the companionway with a firm step, and at once took a survey of the outlying sea.

"He has the way of a real sea captain," said Tinker softly. "You can tell them immediate, for they don't take a look outward as landsmen do."

There was nothing to see but curling seas, and the pirate turned his attention to the ship itself. His lip curled superciliously as he scanned the new masts. Probably they were not exact copies of those used in his day, and, consequently, they awakened derision in his prejudiced mind.

Continuing his observations, he made the circuit of the deck, looking to everything. Only once did he seem favorably impressed. The working men were using a system of tackling explained by Captain Mary, and as she copied from the latest ideas in mechanics, it was a device that saved much strength, enabling few men to do as much as several who relied wholly on muscle. The ingenuity of it appealed to the old mariner.

Now and then he forgot to watch, and his face grew dreamy and his eyes blank, and this impressed Mary.

"I wonder what it means?" she said to Ralston, sinking her voice. "He is thinking deeply on something."

"I surmise that I can guess what. Captain Kidd wants to know how much time has passed since he went to sleep. Conditions show him that it is a long while since he went into his drugged sleep, and it's natural he should want to know how long."

"But he is not Captain Kidd," Mary persisted.

Ralston shook his head in silence.

"My guess," she resumed, "is that he is a criminal, a man who did some ill deed a year or so ago, and is wondering how he will fare when we make our next port. More likely, perhaps, he is a stage actor."

"Wait until he learns that it is the year nineteen hundred odd and see how he takes the news."

Then it was Mary's turn to shake her head, for she was firmly resolved not to believe the astounding claim that Robert Kidd was alive.

At noon Ralston spoke to the old mariner about Ben Abou Hamid's bones, and it was agreed that they should have a sea burial at once. A blanket and spare tarpaulin were spread on the floor of the secret stateroom, and it only remained to wrap them and, when duly weighted, drop the bundle overboard.

Kidd stood above the relics of mortality and looked down at them. His powerful face was free from harshness, but it held nothing like sorrow.

"He was a true, faithful servant," the master said deliberately. "He served me long before I was given command of the Adventure galley by my Lord Bellamore's influence, which was in sixteen hundred and ninety-five. He was with me in the ship at Madeira, the Cape Verdes, Madagascar, Malabar—but why particularize? Long, long years he served me, skillfully, loyally, and was as near a personal friend as servant could be."

He paused and stared at the skeleton.

"His was no ignoble ancestry," the master pursued. "Born in Arabia near Shuara, on the Gulf of Aden, he had a cast of royal blood, but was of a family latterly seafaring men. As such he was fitted for the salt seas, and as a faithful man he made a devoted servant."

Another pause, but still the steady regard for the skeleton.

"Go to thy rest, Ben Abou Hamid!" he then added. "Peace, peace!"

He turned to his companions.

"Wrap the remains," he continued evenly.

Tinker came forward apologetically.

"If I may so suggest," he said, "I see a good idea a year ago when in the sloop Wine-o'-the-Seas. A sailor died, and afore he was buried in the ocean the captain put a paper in his wrappings with the date when he was cast over. Why should we not do the same? Listen to this!"

He turned his attention to a slip of paper he carried and read:

"Committed to the deep this twentieth day of June, nineteen hundred and ten."

Kidd started back like one who had received a blow.

"What?" he gasped. "What did you say?"

CHAPTER XII.

KIDD GROWS VIOLENT.

TINKER fell back a step. To him it looked as if the old mariner was about to leap at him, and he had too much awe to desire such an encounter. Warily watching, he explained.

"I read the date of this day. June twentieth, nineteen hundred and ten."

"Great mercy! Is it—is it really—June?"

The last word was spoken after a significant pause, and Ralston realized that it was a would-be stratagem. Kidd had almost repeated the year, and, for some reason, had thought better of it. The point was small, for he had already named seventeen hundred and two in his earlier remarks, but his brain was not clear now.

He had the stupendous truth at last. Granted that he was the real Robert Kidd, he knew that he had lain under the spell of Ben Hamid's drug more than two centuries.

He knew, and the shock was severe. The pink of his face had faded away and given place to ghastly paleness, his eyes stared wildly, and his face twitched nervously. Horror was upon him.

Back of all, however, was the strong, dominating will, and as he realized that he was under the survey of other men he reasserted himself. Once more his shoulders were thrown back and his expression became steady.

"June!" he craftily repeated. "I shall still be in time to keep my appointment. Finish caring for my servant."

The skeleton was wrapped and the weight added, after which the sewing was done. Going to the deck the men gently lowered the remains, and all that was mortal of the Arab disappeared in the sea. When Ralston turned away from the rail he saw Captain Kidd moving toward the companionway. A moment later he was in the secret room, and the others did not see him again until noon.

By that time their work was done in making ready, and they sat at table with the knowledge that, soon after, the unique craft would be tested with bellying sails.

Kidd had been duly notified, and he appeared promptly, though without undue haste, and took the head of the table. Never before had they seen him so much at ease. His face was serene, his manner unruffled, and, without explanation, he proceeded to do the honors of the table as a commander should, urbane, courteous and thoughtful of his companions.

It was a strange meal, with such a host. More than once Ralston caught himself looking across the board with pity. Granted that the pirate was as bad as his contemporaries had believed, his situation was now miserable almost to the border of the ghastly. He had come back to a world he would not know, to people very different from those of his day, a man alone because of his being unlike others, and with a body more than two hundred years old—or was it but fifty? Had it stood still while he slept, or was it as aged as the time since his birth?

The young man could not forbear a shot at Captain Mary after they left the cabin.

"It seems to me you are very polite to our pirate if you think him merely a modern rascal," he said, jestingly.

"I am fixed in my belief," she returned, "but I want him to reveal himself. He will some time do it if he thinks us friends, but never to foes."

"Well," he retorted, smiling, "humor your modern man, and I'll study my Captain Kidd."

Unknown to him Dorcas had been listening, and she now had her word.

"But, sir," she remarked, "you know that no drug could keep a body from going to dust for two hundred years. Honora and I both say so. It is against nature."

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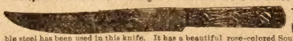

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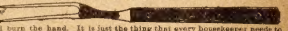

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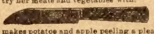

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"Dinna be so sure," put in Sandy. "There were wizards and witches in old times. I make me sure the mon is what Ralston says."

This conversation was an earnest of the days that followed, Mary and the women holding to one opinion and Ralston and Sandy to another. Tinker was noncommittal.

No more was said then, for their duties called. With the preliminaries attended to, they had only to try the sails on the ship. If she was ketch below, she was brigantine aloft, and, by arrangement, Mary gave the orders from the deck, and the others unloosed the sails and hauled them into place.

The mixed vessel did not get her steerageway as readily as was expected, but the wind favored and, as the canvas gradually filled, Captain Mary, at the wheel, handled her handsomely and presently got the "feel." The Royal Hope thrust her bows into the north and stood away.

Tinker set the example by hurrahing loudly, and he instantly had company. With the cheers rising gayly they began leaving the polar region behind them. Sandy ran to and fro, peering over the rail and down into the hold.

"She bears it so far," he said jubilantly. "She don't complain none to speak of. If the seams don't open and the butts don't start——"

That was the one thing that pressed upon all hands. Solid as the hull seemed, the seams and the butts were open to doubt until proved safe. If a leak developed there would be trouble, and a serious taking in of water would be more than they could handle with so small a crew.

"She gathers headway every second," said Tinker.

"Ay, lad," Sandy agreed. "She will soon be doing five knots."

"Five!" cried Ralston. "I'm looking for ten."

"In this butter-box? Then, mon, ye will ne'er get your look."

It was only a reasonable prediction, for, whatever the original Royal Hope might have been capable of doing, her sail area was not now fit to handle her lumpy build more than fairly well.

Ralston had just offered to relieve Mary at the wheel, and she had refused to permit it, when Captain Kidd, who had been watching everything in silence, studying a style of canvas he did not understand, quietly approached.

"I think," he said, "that you have no compass?"

"That is right," Ralston returned.

"It is unfortunate."

"Very. None was brought along from the Sea Ranger or the Spare Sail—the two wrecked vessels, you know—and we have found none here. Bad!"

"If you lose the sun and the stars you will be helpless."

There was the slightest trace of a question in this, as if Kidd was wondering whether modern science had developed anything that would replace the time-old compass, and Ralston was not slow to catch the point.

"Wholly helpless, sir," he answered.

The old mariner walked about, scanning everything in sight. Except that he occasionally sent a look aloft to see how the cloth was drawing, and sometimes lingered to notice how well the sails bellied, he was now chiefly interested in what was old. The ancient hull and such of its fittings as remained after the repairs interested him, and more than once he ran a hand gently over the woodwork.

"There is almost love in his look and touch," Ralston softly said to Mary. "I fancy there is an aching void in that man's breast. What is old here is the only link that binds him to the past, to his own distant day."

"I might agree to that if I believed him to be what you think."

Ralston ignored the last remark.

"That man will not last long," he added, more forcibly. "He came out of his sleep firm and strong, but there is a falling off in his muscular powers. Arrested age will have its due, and he will soon collapse. Mark my word, he will not live to see any port."

Mary said nothing, but she studied the movements of the mysterious man and felt that he was weakening. This was especially noticeable when, presently, he went below. In the companionway his carriage was that of an old, decrepit man.

"I don't know," said Ralston, "what we ought to do with him. I may be foolish, but I really feel some pity. Think of his lonely coming back to life. On the other hand, think of the black record of the pirate Kidd. Has he atoned for his crimes? Ought we to make him a hospital patient or confine him to his room as a desperado?"

Sandy approached with a question, and the subject was dropped, and when Ralston had attended to a minor ship duty, they again gave all their attention to the behavior of the ship.

She was riding easily, her squatty frame finding no difficulty from the following seas, and the breeze was singing gently in the rigging. Under sail, they were standing away into the north, their place of hope, and e ery capful of wind was so much in their favor. Shipwreck, peril, and suffering were forgotten—they were bound north, straight into the sea road of better ships, into the region of rescue. Yet, they were in a hull two hundred years old.

Half an hour later there was a quick, yet heavy, step at the companionway, and they turned to see Captain Kidd again on deck. A new Kidd was with them. On his head was a jaunty, three-cornered hat, and at his hip swung an old-fashioned cutlass. His late lassitude had vanished, and he carried himself erect and had a masterful manner. His strong face was cold and his eyes gleamed under drawn brows—altogether, an unpleasant figure.

He advanced to where Ralston stood mute, filled with premonitions of new trouble.

"Sir," said the old mariner, peremptorily, "I will relieve you of the command. This is my ship, and I prefer to command her. You will be retained as mate, but I am captain. It is your watch below. Go!"

He pointed to the companionway, and his meaning was surely clear.

"This ship," said Ralston, pacifically, "is now a home for shipwrecked men and women. There is no captain here——"

"Wrong! I am captain!" Kidd curtly interrupted. "Do you deny it?"

"I merely say that we pull together, one and all."

"Varlet, do ye aspire to be put in irons?" demanded the old mariner fiercely. "I'll have no words from you, and if you give them, to the masthead you go. I'll whip ye till your back crawls. Go below!"

Ralston stood in temporary dismay. The pirate's face was twitching, his eyes gleamed strangely, and there was every evidence of a startling fact—he had gone mad.

He drew the cutlass so violently that it rang hissingly.

"Go!" he repeated, stamping his foot. "Go, or you are a dead man!"

Next week's Ledger will contain the concluding chapters of this remarkable story. You will miss a great treat if you do not read it to the end. We will give you constantly the very best stories of entertainment that money will buy, so send in your subscription and take the Ledger regularly, if you are not doing so. You will not regret it.

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* * *

TWO VIEWPOINTS.

Young Mrs. Allen stood before the showcase in which was displayed a big black hat with a drooping feather.

"Fifty dollars!" she sighed. "I know I cannot afford it, but I'm going to have it. I can put off paying for it a month, anyway; and then I'll tell Harry I must have fifty dollars extra. He will look worried, but won't say anything, and later he will give me the money. That is the way he always does. I never bought a real hat in my life. It is a shame!"

She passed into the room, where the head milliner was engaged with a couple evidently from the country.

"I hope you have made up your mind to take that hat, Mrs. Allen," said the milliner, smiling cordially. "It looks as if it had been designed especially for you."

The country people turned with frank curiosity. Mrs. Allen saw that the man was tall and rawboned, with a big mustache, and that the woman was a short, stout, motherly-looking person with a round face, kind blue eyes, and smooth brown hair just beginning to turn gray. A mourning bonnet of ancient pattern lay on the counter, and perched above the round face of the woman was a modern hat, ornamented with a white owl's head and a pair of stiff white wings. There was absolutely no harmony between the woman and the hat; and Mrs. Allen had an absurd moment in which it seemed to her the owl was crying, "Help!"

"How much is this hat worth?" asked the little woman, as she surveyed herself in the mirror.

"Only $8.50," was the reassuring response; but the prospective customer removed the hat hastily.

"Mercy!" she exclaimed. "I wouldn't think of paying over five dollars for a hat! You'll have to show me something else."

"Now, Martha," remonstrated her husband, "if you like that hat I want you to have it—that is, leaving off the owl. It looks to me like a sin to kill anything like that. But I intend you to have what you want, if it costs ten dollars! And don't you forget it."

"Why, pa!" The little woman looked up affectionately into his face. "You know I wouldn't spend ten dollars for a hat and you working so hard and never buying a thing for yourself."

"Well, I'm going down to the hardware now to buy me something handsome, Martha. I'm going to get me the prettiest double-furrow plow you ever saw!"

"Don't be gone long," she cautioned him. "You know we've got to be starting back soon."

When he had left the shop she said to the milliner in a confidential tone:

"Now that was just like pa to want me to get that hat when he knows he can't afford it. I reckon you think I am hard to please, but you see, I've never thought much about hats. There's always been so much else for me to think about, housekeeping and sewing and mending and taking care of the children. We've raised a big family." She was now addressing Mrs. Allen as well as the milliner. "Two of our girls are married and each has a little one of her own. One of our boys is in the army and one is a missionary in China. We lost our youngest son."

She looked at the mourning bonnet on the counter.

"I've put on mourning for him," she said, "and after that, well, people don't feel like dressing up when they've lost so much. And still we ought to be thankful. Jimmy was the best child that ever lived, it seems to me, and every night when I think of the others so far away, it's comforting to remember him, so close to us in his quiet grave."

Mrs. Allen saw that the milliner had grown thoughtful. And indeed the milliner's imagination was touched. She saw the little woman not merely as a prospective customer, but as the heroine of a life of willing sacrifice, a woman who had loved and toiled and suffered. She took up a soft gray hat, unpinned the price ticket and dropped it to the floor. With deft fingers she fastened a bunch of violets here, pulled out a loop there and set the hat carefully on the smooth brown hair. The result was surprising. The little woman's eyes took on a deeper color, the gray threads in her hair blended with the silken braid, and in the play of lights and shadows the lines in her face faded out as if by magic. She looked years younger.

"Why, Martha!" exclaimed a delighted voice. "That's the prettiest hat I almost ever did see!"

The man's weatherbeaten face was softened, his eyes were for his wife alone. Mrs. Allen felt that she ought to look the other way, but his expression held her spellbound.

"Like it, pa?" The little woman smiled up at him. "And just to think it cost exactly what I'd made up my mind to pay! I'll get you to put it in the box, ma'am, and I'll wear the old one home."

"No, you won't," said her husband, handing the milliner a bill. "Think I want to sit by that old hat going home when you look so good in this one? Keep it on, honey. You look just as you did when I was courting!"

After they had left the milliner turned with an attempt at briskness. "And now we will try on the wonderful hat again," she said.

But Mrs. Allen had risen, a flush on her cheeks, a new light in her eyes.

"You know," she said, hurriedly, "I've made up my mind not to take that hat! When I came in here, I fancied my whole existence revolved round it, but now it does not seem so essential. I did not know there were so many other things in the world besides hats. I'll tell you what I intend to do." Her eyes sparkled and her dimples came into play. "I intend to bring my husband up here and let him watch me try on hats. And if there is one here he likes, and if he will look at me the way that man looked at his wife, I'll wear it if—if it has an owl's head on it!"

* * *

If a man doesn't even look at a pretty girl opposite in a street car, it's a sign he is either blind or the woman seated by his side is his wife.

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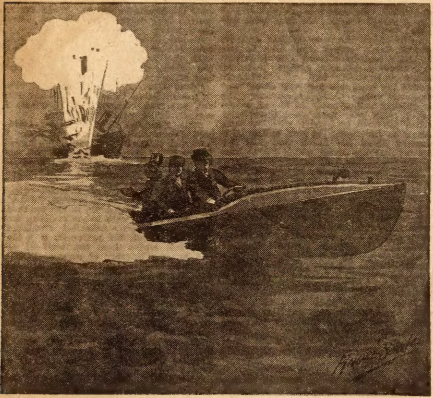
Frontivard, the Terrible

Or, Brothers of the Red -:- By Stephen Gaillard



A column of smoke and flame went up.

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Begun in No. 12, March 21. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from the office of publication.

[Author's Note:—With the final defeat and elimination of the Brothers of the Red through the unceasing efforts of that modern band of vigilantes known as the Invisible Tribunal, there passed into oblivion the most dangerous and dreaded criminal organization that ever defied the forces of law and order. Above the ordinary level of the powers that prey, the Brothers constituted a powerful, murderous, far-reaching society against whose activities the ordinary machinery of the law proved ineffectual. To cope successfully with these wily foes of civilization, arose the league known as the Invisible Tribunal, the membership of which consisted of men drawn from all walks of life, but selected individually for courage, determination, and fidelity to the oaths they swore for the protection of society by fair means or foul. From the memoirs of their most formidable agent, Cesare Frontivard, and his comrade, Edmund Reverdy, is taken the strange record of events herein set forth.]

THE MISSING SHIP.

NEVER, perhaps, had the iron nerve of the great secret service detective been displayed in a more remarkable manner. There had been a whiz, a gleam of steel through the open window, and a stiletto had stuck quivering in the wall within six inches of Frontivard's head. Reverdy had started to his feet with an exclamation of dismay; the visitor, seated in the armchair beside the writing desk, had leaned forward, gripping the arms of the chair, and gazed as if fascinated at the piece of steel which had come so near putting an end to the secret agent's career; Frontivard alone had remained unmoved, calm as if it had been but a bunch of thistledown which had floated past his face. Reaching back, he plucked the weapon from the wall. It was of peculiar make, hilt and blade in one piece, and the steel hilt was surmounted by a representation of a skull, while the guard represented crossbones.

"Ah," said Frontivard, "another souvenir from our friends the 'Reds!' Hold on, Reverdy!" to his friend, who was halfway to the door, intent upon pursuing the thrower of the knife. "The fellow who did that will not be such a fool as to let you catch him in the open street. Quite a curiosity, too, in its way," he went on, as if nothing had interrupted him. "Have you never seen one?" and he handed the weapon to the visitor.

The latter took it and turned it about in his hands, looking at it curiously. "No," he said, "I have never seen one. I think, if you will permit me, I should like to keep this one as a souvenir. Quite suggestive, isn't it, the skull and crossbones surmounting the deadly blade?"

He was a large man, this visitor of Frontivard's, with a domelike forehead and a bulldog jaw, and cold gray eyes that looked you through and through. Were his name to be written here, in connection with the detective agents of the Invisible Tribunal, it would startle the world.

"Might I suggest," he went on, looking at Frontivard with an impatient, yet not disapproving glance, "that you change your location? Whoever threw this knife may have another."

The secret agent shrugged his shoulders as he rose and complied with his visitor's request. "My hour is written in the book of Fate," he said, "and until that hour comes I walk safe in the midst of danger. This is my creed," he continued, quoting:

"'On two days it is useless to flee from
thy grave—
The appointed and the unappointed
day;
On the first not the legions of Caesar
could save,
Nor thee on the second the universe
slay.'"

"A most Islamic doctrine, truly," said the visitor, "which is, perhaps, what makes the Turks such good soldiers and you the daredevil that you are. But my friend, you have done more than any other man to break the power of the most dangerous and vengeful criminal organization of modern times. Take care that in their dying throes they do not make you pay with your life for their downfall."

"Kismet," said Frontivard smiling, "what will be, will be. But, sir, do not count the power of the 'Reds' as broken while Carlo Monaldi remains alive."

"But you say he is isolated, reduced to a handful of followers, and even they lacking the confidence and audacity that once rendered them so formidable."

"True, but while the master mind remains there is always danger of a revival. Consider how suddenly the 'Brothers of the Red' arose. They were the creation of two master minds—Angelo Corte and Carlo Monaldi. Corte was killed by French gendarmes in Corsica, but not before he and Monaldi had welded a vast number of anarchists and criminals into a widespread, far-reaching organization, which, however, though tremendously formidable, derived all its cohesiveness from the brains of its leaders. The death of Corte was a severe blow to the organization, but Monaldi remained; and guided by his criminal genius, the 'Reds' gained rapidly in power and daring, and until he is dead no man can say their power is broken."

"And the woman who sometimes masquerades as the Princess Morosini—what of her?"

Frontivard looked at his visitor, who was smiling, with that respect which was due to one of the world's great men, yet with a firmness of purpose expressed in his glance such as a man needed who was about to defend one against whom the doom of the Invisible Tribunal had been written.

"She is a remarkable woman, sir," he said, "but not a criminal at heart. I know something of her history, though she is quite unaware of it, and, faith! she is hardly to be blamed for being an enemy of government. That she has the genius to become again the leading spirit of a formidable band I do not doubt; but that she will not, I dare guarantee if the Tribunal will permit me to become answerable for her."

"Oh, ho!" exclaimed the visitor, an expression grimly humorous in his steely eyes, "is it possible that Frontivard, the ruthless, has fallen under the spell of a woman?"

"Not to the prejudice of my oath or my duty, sir," said Frontivard, firmly.

"True, true, my friend! No one knows that better than I, and I can promise in the name of the Tribunal that you shall have your wish. And now, if you will be good enough to look out of the window—cautiously I beg of you—and see if my taxi is still waiting."

"It is still there," said Frontivard, looking out of the window, "but would it not be well to dismiss the taxi and call for one of our own machines from headquarters? You accuse me of rashness, and yet you trust yourself with a chauffeur whom you do not know."

"Nor does he know me, my friend, so you see I am quite safe."

"But you may be seen leaving here. We have already had sufficient evidence that some of the 'Reds' are watching this place, to murder Reverdy or me, no doubt, if the opportunity offers, but all who come here are fair game for them."

"You fear far more for others than for yourself, my friend, but in this case I assure you your fear is groundless. And now farewell to both of you. I leave Chicago tonight."

And the great man took his departure, as unostentatious as he was famous, and with that fatalistic confidence in his own invulnerability which so often characterizes men of action.

"Who do you suppose threw the knife?" asked Reverdy, when he and Frontivard were alone together.

"Haven't the slightest idea," said Frontivard, "except that I am sure it was a 'Red'."

"Umph! Perhaps it is the Grand Master's method of giving notice that he is still unbeaten."

"Perhaps."

A knock at the door interrupted them, and in response to Frontivard's brief "Come in," there entered a sleek-bodied, smooth-faced person, in whom they recognized Joe Sirota, the proprietor of a Clark street fruit stand which they sometimes patronized.

"A letter for da Signor Carroll," said the fruit vender, smiling ingratiatingly.

Frontivard took the tinted envelope from his hand. It was addressed in neat feminine characters to "Mr. Pembroke Carroll," and there lingered about it a faint, delicate odor of some rare perfume.

"Wait," said Frontivard, tearing open the envelope. He gave a slight start as he perused the contents, and looking up glanced keenly at Sirota.

"Where did you get this?"

"A smalla boy he give it to me."

"Hum! Very well, thank you, Joe, and here is something for your trouble," and he tossed a coin to the smiling messenger.

"Read," he said, handing the note to Reverdy as soon as the door had closed behind the fruit vender.

This is what Reverdy read:

"Signor: For having saved your life my life is forfeit. I am held a prisoner in the house you doubtless know of at 301 West —— place. I am condemned to die ere another sunrise. I have no right to ask help from you, but I wish that you should know my fate and why it has overtaken me. I am enabled to transmit these lines to you through the devotion of my old nurse and foster-mother, who will get them to you in some way.

"Farewell,

"LETITIA."

The note was without date and had

Tobacco Habit Banished.

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the appearance of having been written hurriedly.

"An obvious lure," said Reverdy, handing it back.

"Do you think so?"

"Good heavens! Do you doubt it?"

"She saved my life."

"Perhaps yes, perhaps no. That is, I mean, perhaps she intended to save your life and perhaps she did not. Her outcry may have been the result of mere hysteria—my own nerves were on edge, I remember."

"No, no, the Signora Letitia is not a woman to lose her self-control so easily. The cry was meant as a warning, I would swear it was."

Reverdy came up to his friend and taking him playfully by the shoulders smiled at him. "My dear fellow, you are surely not turning sentimental are you—you the cool-headed, the clear-headed?" Suddenly he stopped and stepped back as he noted the expression in Frontivard's eyes. "Good heavens! you do not mean to——?"

"Yes, I do."

"You love this woman?"

"I have not said so; but nevertheless, she must not appeal to me in vain."

"That note may be a forgery."

"I mean to find out if it is."

"She herself may have written the note to lure you to your death."

"I mean to find out."

"Oh, very well! Let us go."

"No, not let us go, but let me go. I will not involve others, and you least of all, in what, as you say, may be a trap."

"And I say let us go."

"Reverdy!"

"Come, come, my friend. We have dared greater perils together than 301 West —— place is likely to hold."

"But that was in the line of duty. This is my personal affair. I make it so."

"And mine, old fellow; I make it so."

The two men stood for a moment looking into each other's eyes, and as they did so their hands met in a mighty grip. And into that look, that grip, were concentrated all their years of comradeship and devotion.

"Come then, my friend," said Frontivard. "We should surpass ourselves tonight."

* * * * *

A certain lonely house—lonely though surrounded by crowding tenements in a densely populated quarter—stood with unlighted windows, like sightless eyes, in a shabby street, the clean-swept asphalt of which seemed to mock the squalor of the houses on either hand. Between the house and the one next to it was a covered passage. Along this passage crept two men. The passage was utterly dark, save for the light which filtered into it from either end. The two men came at length to a window about midway of the passage. One of them tried it. It was locked. Taking a thin piece of steel from his pocket he forced the lock. In another minute the men had climbed through the window into an empty room in the basement of the tenement.

"Umph! Nothing here," whispered Frontivard, taking an electric torch from his pocket and flashing it quickly around. He held the torch in his left hand; in his right was his revolver.

A brief survey showed the other rooms in the basement to be empty also. Groping their way to the staircase—they dared not make much use of the torch, not knowing what eyes might be upon them in the surrounding shadows—they made their way to the floor above. The stair creaked, but there seemed none to hear, for the floor above was empty and tenantless as the basement.

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"Are you sure this is the place?" whispered Reverdy.

"Yes; certain sure. She may be held prisoner in one of the rooms above. Come! Confound these stairs!"

The first stair upon which he had placed his foot had creaked with a sound that seemed to reverberate through the empty house.

The floor above was in darkness less complete than those below, on account of a skylight through the dust and grime of which a little light filtered. By this dim light they discerned, directly in front of them as they reached the head of the stairs, an open door.

"Nothing here, either," whispered Frontivard, entering the room to which the door led. "Ah, God!" He stumbled headlong, felled by a terrific blow, his revolver exploding as he plunged forward. Reverdy raised his weapon and fired pointblank at a shadowy form, but the next moment he, too, sank to the floor, felled by a blow from behind.

Frontivard, recovering consciousness as if gradually awakening from deep sleep, attempted to raise himself from the floor on which he was lying, only to become aware that his hands and feet were fettered. He then attempted to raise himself up, only to discover that a steel chain around his waist was bolted to the floor. The chain, however, allowed freedom of movement for a couple of feet or more, and reaching out his manacled hands he discovered Reverdy in the same plight as himself.

"Faith!" he thought, "they must be sure of their neighborhood. They haven't even taken the trouble to gag us."

Despite his desperate plight and the fate he knew he might expect, his iron nerve was unshaken.

"Reverdy, Reverdy!" he whispered, and reaching over with his manacled hands tried to shake his comrade.

Reverdy stirred uneasily, moaned, muttered incoherently, and attempted to sit up. The resistance seemed to restore his struggling consciousness.

"Great heavens! Where are we?" he muttered.

"Prisoners to the 'Reds.' You were right, the note was a lure. I guess we are done for, old fellow."

"Not so fast, not so fast!" whispered Reverdy, the Hercules, now fully alive to the situation. "Wait until I have recovered my strength a bit, and we will see if I can't pull these bolts out of the floor."

There was a sound of a door opening somewhere in the house.

"Hush," said Frontivard. "Be quiet! Pretend you are still unconscious."

The opening of the door in the distance was succeeded by footsteps, and presently several persons entered the room where the two secret agents lay. One of them lighted a gas jet. It was Carlo Monaldi. He was accompanied by Paolo and Letitia. The Grand Master looked down at the two prisoners.

"So, my friends, the Demon Frontivard and Reverdy, the Hercules, we are about to settle old scores at last."

"Not here," said Letitia. In this, the "Reds'" hour of triumph, it seemed that their Queen could scarce keep her voice from trembling. "You do not intend to kill them here?"

"Oh, no, not here, surely not here! 'Tis a quiet neighborhood, but not quiet enough for deaths such as theirs will be. No, the hold of the Andrea Doria will be better, much better, for I mean to jest with them a bit before they die. You are fond of jests, my friend the Demon Frontivard; but I doubt if you will appreciate the jest when it is upon yourself."

"Perhaps they are already dead," whispered Letitia, her face turning strangely pale.

Monaldi and Paolo did not notice her paleness, for they were bending over the prisoners.

"No, they are not dead," said the Grand Master, rising, "only stunned. Satan grant that they may recover sufficiently to realize death when it comes."

"And the other prisoner," said Letitia, "is he safe on board the Andrea Doria?"

"Yes, he is safe; I myself saw him chained in the hold, before I returned to spring the trap into which the clever Frontivard walked so blindly. It will, indeed, be an interesting reunion in the hold of the Andrea Doria—the presiding genius of the Invisible Tribunal; the Grand Master of the 'Reds'; Frontivard, the Demon; Reverdy, the Hercules. Fortune has repaid all the spite of the past in one grand stroke tonight."

"I do not yet understand how they came to be here tonight," said Letitia.

"Oh, that was a jest of mine, Signora, as clever as any ever played by Frontivard. As for their chief, the chauffeur of his taxi was a man of ours, and not being familiar with the city, he did not scent danger until we pounced upon him in a quiet street near the docks."

"You will not change your plans on account of tonight's events?"

"No; the effects of their accursed activities have made Chicago unsafe for us. Indeed, I long for the sun of Italy and a sight of the green hills of Naples. And you?"

"I shall go to London, where I think the Princess Morosini will come out of her retirement."

"Good! And now au revoir, my dear Princess Morosini, I must go to prepare for the transfer of this precious cargo to the hold of the Andrea Doria. With their three most terrible foes removed, I think the 'Reds' are about to experience a revival."

The three, Monaldi, Letitia, and Paolo, turned out the light and left the room.

"Great heavens!" whispered Frontivard, "they have got the chief!"

Reverdy gritted his teeth. "Wait," he whispered, "no steel was ever so strong but it would break. We may turn the tables yet."

As he spoke the door creaked ever so faintly, there was a light step in the darkness, and Frontivard was conscious of a sweet presence, a delicate perfume, as a form bent over him and a soft hand sought his hand and left in it something hard and cold. The presence was gone as quickly and silently as it had come; and it was only then that Frontivard felt of the hard, cold object that had been placed in his hand. It was a key. He reached down his hands and felt for the lock of the chain which bound him to the floor. The key fitted.

"Reverdy," he whispered eagerly, "the note was not a lure. She left the key in my hand—a key to the fetters. Try it and see if it fits yours, too."

A moment later Reverdy rose to a sitting position with a joyous though suppressed exclamation. He had freed his hands before Frontivard could stop him.

"No, no! Stop, my friend! Replace your fetters. We are going aboard the Andrea Doria. Remember the chief is there. Faith, Friend Monaldi, I think we hold the key to the situation in more ways than one."

When, half an hour later, four men came into the room, and completely muffling the prisoners in heavy blankets, bore them to an automobile which was waiting in the alley behind the tenement, Frontivard held in his mouth the precious key.

* * * * *

The three men lying chained to the bulwarks near the foot of a ladder in the utter darkness of the hold of the Andrea Doria heard the usual sounds of casting off from a dock, and then the smooth purr and throb of the engines as the boat got under way. Then, through the planking which alone separated them from the river, they could hear the gentle lap and murmur of calm water flowing swiftly past, while from time to time there came from above the muffled notes of the boat's whistle as the bridges were signaled. Presently, however, the Andrea Doria began to roll, as if upon a gentle swell, and the lapping of calm water was succeeded by the splash of waves against her bulwarks.

"Hum!" muttered Frontivard, who had been counting the bridges signaled, "we must have been lying in the North Branch." His muttered comments were the first words any of the prisoners had spoken since he and Reverdy had been brought to the hold. Now, however, the man upon his right turned his body as much as his shackles would permit and exclaimed: "Great heavens! Is it you they've got?"

"It is even so, sir," whispered Frontivard, "and the case would be quite hopeless if I did not hold in my hand the key to our fetters."

"Ha! What! Then it must be that you are here of your own will?"

"In some sort, yes, but—ah, listen! Some one is lifting the hatch at the top of the ladder! Now we shall see."

Some one was indeed fumbling with the hatch, and presently they could hear it removed, though the hold remained in as utter darkness as before. A moment later there was a gleam of light which was immediately obscured, as a bulky form began to descend the ladder. It was the Grand Master.

Holding aloft the lantern in his hand, he flashed it in the faces of his prisoners.

"So," he said, "Messieurs Frontivard and Reverdy, we meet again, but the tables are turned since our last meeting, are they not? And we have a notable addition to our company besides," and flashing the lantern full in his face he looked insolently into the eyes of the chief of the Invisible Tribunal.

None of the prisoners spoke in reply, and presently Monaldi went on: "I have but come now to see that I have you safe and sound and that my men have done their work properly." He bent down and examined the fetters carefully by the light of the lantern. "Later I will come again to have some little conference with you, Signors, to try to make you realize by the application of practical, even painful illustrations, that death which you will long for ere it comes. Do I make myself clear, Signors?"

"Clear enough, you devil!" said the chief of the Invisible Tribunal. "Where are we, and where are you taking us?"

"Eh, Signor, have you found voice to speak at last? Caramba! You shall speak at greater length later. But I do not mind answering your questions; I am a reasonable man. Know then Signor, that you are in the hold of the steamer Andrea Doria on the bosom of Lake Michigan, bound for the port of missing ships, or, as you Americans say, to Davy Jones."

"Humph! that is sufficiently explicit, anyway."

"I trust so, Signor. And now, au revoir, my friends. I trust your reflections may be pleasant until I come again."

Perhaps for his own convenience when he came back again later, perhaps because he was willing that his prisoners should have a view of their surroundings as an aid to those pleasant reflections which he had recommended, Monaldi left the lantern swinging from a hook in the floor of the deck above just over the prisoners' heads. Whatever his motive may have been, the act proved his undoing.

No sooner had he closed the hatchway behind him than Frontivard was busy with the fetters. Three minutes later the prisoners were standing upon their feet stretching their cramped limbs.

"Now what, my friend?" said the chief of the Invisible Tribunal. "We are free, but unarmed and with a boat full of cutthroats up yonder."

"The situation is difficult, all right," said Frontivard, "but we are lucky to have our limbs free. Come, let's have a look around down here before we venture up above, and tread lightly as you value your lives," and he took the lantern from its hook.

The hold of the Andrea Doria was a small place, but, as it proved, interesting. Fastened low down in the bulkhead on either hand were about a dozen iron rings with chains attached similar to those by which the prisoners had been shackled, while upon the wall at one end hung a number of strange-looking implements of steel and wire, together with some of wood, which caused even the iron-nerved Frontivard to shudder as he looked at them.

"Faith!" he said to the chief, who stood beside him, "this must be the 'Reds'' prison ship and torture chamber combined."

The chief was about to reply when a low exclamation from Reverdy, who was groping about at the other end, interrupted him.

"Frontivard, bring the lantern here," he said, and then, as his friend came forward. "Look! What does this mean? Can you make it out?"

What Reverdy had discovered was a small wooden packing-case, harmless-looking enough in itself had it not been for about a yard of fuse which projected from it.

"Ah, what the devil!" exclaimed Frontivard. "Dynamite and a fuse. What is the game, I wonder?"

"To blow us up, I guess," said Reverdy.

The chief made no comment, but clammy beads of perspiration stood upon his forehead which were not caused by the heat of the hold.

"Reverdy," said Frontivard, "you are right. Do you remember Monaldi's remarks in the house yonder about the sun of Italy, the green hills of Naples, and Chicago having been rendered too dangerous for the 'Reds' for the time being? My friends, the Andrea Doria is to be blown up in midlake tonight and we with her."

"And what of the 'Reds' who are on board?" said Reverdy. "They are not going to blow themselves up, too, are they?"

"Oh, they have doubtless provided for their own safety! But wait a minute. Let me think. Ah!" A sinister smile parted his thin lips. "I think I see

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light ahead. Come, my friends,' and he led the way to the foot of the ladder.

"Reverdy,' he said, when they had arrived there, "do you go up first and lift the cover of the hatch. Be careful to make no noise, as you value your life.'

Reverdy went up the ladder and applied his shoulder to the cover of the hatch. It was merely drawn over the opening and not fastened down, and in a moment a breath of fresh air blew down into the stifling atmosphere of the hold.

"Now come down," whispered Frontivard from below, and when Reverdy stepped off the ladder. "Wait for me here," he said.

"You are going to reconnoiter?" asked the chief.

"Yes." And without waiting for further questions he crept up the ladder.

Reaching the top, he protruded his head cautiously above the opening of the hatchway and looked around upon the lower deck of the Andrea Doria. It was empty. The boat was a small one, built originally for carrying fruit and passengers, and the lower deck had been used indifferently for freight or as a salon, according to the occasion. Frontivard crawled out of the opening of the hatchway and crept aft on all fours. A door led to an open deck at the stern, over which the floor of the upper deck projected. Looking through the open door, he saw that the deck was empty, and rising to his feet he went to the rail. As he looked over it he set his teeth hard to keep from uttering an exclamation of joy—a big motor launch was towing in the wake of the steamer, her cable lashed to an iron block in the deck. He raised his head and looked about him into the night. Black storm clouds overcast the sky. Stygian darkness was upon the expanse of water, far away to the south the lights of Chicago were but a dim glow upon the horizon. From the deck above came a low murmur of voices. He listened. Their even monotone suggested a prolonged, perhaps a dull conversation. As he listened a low mutter of thunder rolled across the water. As Frontivard crept back to the hatchway he was smiling—a smile which, could the "Reds" have seen it, would have frozen the blood in their veins.

"One moment now," he said, as he reached the foot of the ladder, to the two men who awaited him, and taking the lantern from Reverdy's hand he crept toward the case of dynamite. Opening the lantern he lighted the fuse.

"Great heavens!" said the chief, as Frontivard returned and hung the lantern on its hook, "what have you done?"

"Repeated an old jest, sir—that is all. Come."

Five minutes later he said to Reverdy: "You go first to assist our friend here into the launch. He is not as used to athletic exercises as we are. Reverdy slid down the rope and got into the launch without difficulty. The chief followed. He was a large man and rather out of training, but people very often display unexpected agility when their lives are at stake. So it was with the chief. He slid down the rope to the launch in safety, and with Reverdy's assistance got aboard. Frontivard came last, gliding down the rope with the agility of a squirrel.

All had gone well so far, thanks no doubt to the darkness of the night and the confidence of the "Reds" in the strength of their fetters, but at any moment they might be discovered and become an easy target for their foes, unarmed and defenseless as they were.

"Get busy with the motor, Reverdy," said Frontivard, "while I cast off," and he bent over the cable by which the launch was being towed. A moment later the last knot was untied and the end of the cable fell with a splash into the waves. The Andrea Doria, under a full head of steam, began to draw away rapidly into the darkness.

Frontivard crept back amidships where the chief had seated himself and where Reverdy was busy with the motor.

"It's so bally dark I can hardly see," said the latter, "but I'll have her going in a minute. Great Scott! What a surprise those fellows yonder are going to get!"

The chief laid his hand upon Frontivard's shoulder. "My friend," he said, "when the 'Reds' call you 'Demon' they do you no more than justice. I congratulate society upon having you for it instead of against it. How long do you think that fuse will burn?"

"About five or ten minutes longer, I should judge. Ha! they've discovered that the launch is missing."

Over the water from the Andrea Doria, scarce visible in the murk, save only for her lights, came a succession of shouts. An instant later a searchlight cut the darkness astern, flashing for some moments hither and thither, then found the launch. A shout of triumph greeted the discovery. A voice that dominated the rest shouted what seemed to be an order; there was a sudden ringing of bells aboard the steamer; her headway ceased, and she began to turn.

"By Jove!" said Reverdy. "They are coming about to pick us up!"

"Get the motor started, and we'll show them a clean pair of heels," said Frontivard, "though I think the chase will be a short one."

The steamer had by this time fairly come about, and was bearing down upon them at terrific speed, the searchlight keeping them covered like a monster eye. Rifles, too, began to crack from her decks, and the bullets to splash in the water about the launch.

"Do you suppose they can have found that lighted fuse and put it out?" said the chief.

"Don't know," said Frontivard, laconically. "Reverdy, if you can't get that motor started pretty quick, we will be run down, or else shot."

Reverdy gave vent to an expletive which was, however, expressive of relief, for at the same moment the motor began to chug. The launch leaped forward, as a horse leaps that feels the spur, and began to gain on the steamer. A shout of rage arose from the decks of the Andrea Doria, and the "Reds" doubled their fusillade as they saw their prey escaping them. Several bullets struck the launch, one carried Frontivard's hat overboard. The peril was imminent, for the searchlight made the fugitives a shining mark.

Suddenly the fusillade ceased and a babel of yells arose from the steamer's decks; then to the watching fugitives in the launch it seemed that the Andrea Doria split open before their eyes, and with a tremendous roar a column of smoke and flame shot to the zenith—up, up, until it seemed to mingle with the storm wrack overhead. A moment later Frontivard, at the helm, had all he could do to keep the launch from being capsized by the swell that succeeded the explosion, while a shower of burning debris fell hissing into the waves about them.

Darkness utter and complete had followed the glare of the explosion; the launch was alone upon the waters. From the southwest came the first hot breath of the approaching storm.

"We'll have some trouble making port in the face of the squall that's coming," said Reverdy, breaking the silence which had fallen upon the party following the catastrophe.

"Do you heed such trifles now?" said Frontivard. "To me, after what we have eescaped, a summer squall seems a paltry thing. Sir," he continued, turning to the chief of the Invisible Tribunal, "you may return to New York with an easy mind. The master mind is dead—the 'Reds' have disbanded."

The great man's private secretary and a number of railway officials were relieved from a state of intense anxiety, and doubtless were prevented from committing all sorts of indiscretions which would have just about wrecked the stock market, by his appearance in his private car the next morning. He expressed the deepest regret that he had caused any one inconvenience, but explained that he had been invited by a friend to take a run on the lake in his private yacht the evening before, and in the hurry of departure had forgotten to notify his secretary; a statement which, as he was a very great man in the world of finance, his secretary and the railway officials took at its face value, wondering perhaps the while at the vagaries of men of genius.

The concluding story of this splendid series will appear in next week's Ledger. Look out for some great detective stories to follow this.

* * *

Turn About.

It was pay day at the Consolidated Coal and Lumber Works and a mine worker was returning home with his monthly envelope. He met a bad man with a pistol, who demanded his wages. The worker handed the money over.

"Now," said he, "my wife will think that I've gambled for drink; won't you shoot a hole in my coat so that I can prove that I was attacked and robbed?"

"Why, certainly," answered the robber.

The worker held out his coattail while the other punctured it with a bullet.

"Another," begged the worker, and the highwayman fired again.

"Another," and there was another hole in the garment—and another, and still another.

"That's all the cartridges I've got," said the robber.

"All the cartridges you've got?" said the worker, picking up a rock. "Then give back that money; hand over your pistol and whatever else you happen to have."

* * *

Gas Lighters.

The new cook was helping her mistress to prepare dinner. All went well until the macaroni was brought out. The cook looked with surprise as she beheld the long white sticks. But when they were carefully placed in water she gave a choking gasp.

"Did you say, missus," she said in an awed voice "that you were going to eat that?"

"Yes, Jane," was the reply, "that is what I intended to do. But you seem surprised. Have you never seen macaroni cooked before?"

"No, ma'am," answered the cook, "I ain't. The last place I was at they always used them things to light the gas with."

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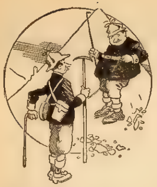


Tall Tourist "Whenever I get on a high place I have a strong desire to jump."

Candid Friend—"When I have a big board bill against me I feel the same way."

A Difficult Seat to Fill.

It is said of Paderewski that just before one of his recitals in Boston he was accosted by an old lady in the entrance hall, who said to him:

"Oh, Mr. Paderewski, I am so glad to see you! I have tried in vain to purchase a ticket. Have you a seat you could let me have?"

"Madam," said the great pianist, "there is but one seat at my disposal, and that you are welcome to if you think fit to take it."

"Yes, yes, and a thousand thanks! Where is it?" was the excited reply

"At the piano!" replied Paderewski

During the Sermon.

A clergyman was preaching in a strange church one Sunday evening While at supper in the vicarage afterward a ring came at the bell. The maid entered and said.

"Please, sir, there is a man at the door who says he wants to speak to the preacher."

The clergyman, thinking he was going to interview some one, got up with alacrity and went into the hall. Here he saw a tall, powerful-looking man about his own size.

"Well my good man, what can I do for you?" he asked, thinking of the other spiritually.

"Well, sor, I was thinking, while I was listening to yer preaching, as how yer might have a pair of trousers as would fit me!"

What He Would Be.

Upon the occasion of his first visit to a parishioner, a certain Boston divine tried hard to make friends with his host's 8-year-old.

"How old are you, my son?" asked the clergyman, benignantly

"Eight," was the laconic response

"Ah, quite a little man," came patronizingly from the minister. "And what are you going to be?" he added, after a slight pause.

"I am going to be nine," said the child, with conviction

What the Card Said.

He—"I wonder what the meaning of that picture is? The youth and maiden are in a tender attitude."

She—"Oh, don't you see? He has just asked her to marry him and she is accepting him. How sweet! What does the artist call the picture?"

He (looking about)—"Oh, I see. It's written on a card at the bottom—'Sold.'"

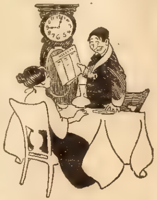
A Farmer's Life.

City Youth (in the country for a day's shooting)—"Ah! How wonderfully bracing this pure country air is! After all there is no life so full of solid comfort as a farmer's, and I wish I could be one instead of a pent-up clerk in a great city"

Farmer Hayseed—"Think you'd like to be a farmer, eh? Do you see that bent-backed old fellow over there grubbin stone and buildin' it into a fence? Been at it from daylight to dark fer six weeks, and ain't half through yet. When that's done, lots harder things has got to be attended to. Makin' stone fences is just restin', 'tain't work. Well, he's a farmer"

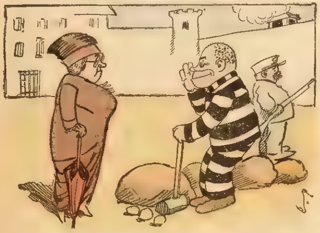
City Youth—"That's strange. Who are those men near him who do nothing but idle about? Aren't they farmers, too?"

Farmer Hayseed—"No, indeed. Them's only hired men"



Mrs. Benham—"And I thought you one man in a thousand.

Benham—"I can go you better than that: last night I thought you were two women"



Woman—"Poor man, I wish I could do something to get you out of here"

Convict—"Well, mum, if you wouldn't mind changing clothes with me when de guard ain't looking, I could do de rest!"

Money Saved.

Wife—"You must take me to the opera tomorrow night. Now, you needn't say that times are hard and money scarce, and all that. Everybody else goes, and I'm going—so there!"

Husband (a smart man)—"Of course we'll go. I saw the new prima donna on the street today—the most entrancingly beautiful creature Heaven ever made. Such eye! Such hair! Such perfect features! I wouldn't miss the opera for the world! Money is very scarce, though."

Wife—"If money is scarce, why didn't you say so before? Never mind the opera. We'll go to the Old Ladies' Dime Sociable instead."

Too Much Talent.

"Where is that barber who used to have the end chair?" asked the customer.

"We had to let him go," replied the boss. "He had too much talent."

"Whaddy ya mean, talent?" asked the customer

"He got so he illustrated his stories with cuts when he was shaving people," explained the boss

Tribulation.

He—"Darling, why are you so sad?"

She (gulping down a sob)—"Oh, dearest I was just thinking this will be our last evening together until tomorrow night!"—Puck

A Trial of Strength.

"Oh, Dolly, did you heah of the tewwible accident to Arthur this mawnin

"No. What was it?"

"He got weckless and lighted a strong cigar, and it upthet hith bwain."

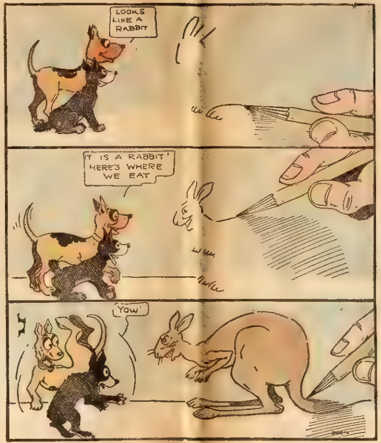
Time Limit.

"I shall never forgive him."

But he has invited you to a dance next Thursday night

"Oh, dear, I had forgotten all about that. Then I shan't forgive him until next Wednesday"

ARTIST FOOLINGS


LOOKS LIKE A RABBIT
IT IS A RABBIT! HERE'S WHERE WE EAT
YOW!

NOTHING DONE.

Winter is too cold fer work;
Freezin' weather makes me shirk.

Spring comes on an' finds me wishin'
I could end my days a-fishin'.

Then in summer, when it's hot,
I say work kin go to pot.

Autumn days, so calm an' hazy,
Sorter makes me kinder lazy.

That's the way the seasons run.
Seems I can't get nothin' done.

She Misunderstood.

Mr. Jordan was tourning by motor car, and arrived at a crowded village inn quite late one evening. There was no spare bed to be had, which was a great disappointment, as he was tired, and very much disliked the thought of driving farther that night.

"Haven't you at least a bundle of hay you can give me?" he demanded of the landlady

"There isn't a thing left," she answered, "except a bit of cold roast beef"

Approval.

"What do you think o' dis idea of sendin' malefactors of great wealth to jail?" asked Meandering Mike

"Great!" replied Plodding Pete. "I always did say something ought to be done to make de jails more luxurious."

Cruelty.

Some say that a man who would "beat an egg" would be so cruel as to "whip cream," "thrash wheat" or even "lick a postage stamp"

A Judge of Mankind.

"How is it, Colonel?" asked the hopeful young bunko steerer, addressing the hoary-headed master of the craft, "that you have always been so successful in picking out juicy suckers, and never have to waste your time on unprofitable subjects?"

"I simply wait till I hear a man say that he is a pretty good judge of human nature," replied the veteran, "and then I know he is just what I am looking for."—Puck

Wanted His Straight.

After a "night off" with the boys, Big Con, an East Side gin-mixer, got pointed in the wrong direction and walked off the dock into the river

At the end of half an hour's time two cops and a watchman fished him out more dead than alive. When the whisky was brought Con's lips moved slightly.

"Roll me on a bar'l fust," he whispered faintly, "an' git some of this water out. If yer don't 'twill weaken th' booze."

An Urgent Case.

Lady—"Doctor, I wish you would call around to see my husband some evening when he is at home Do not let him know that I asked you because he declares he is not sick; but I know he has consumption or something He's going into a decline"

Doctor—"I am astonished, but I will call What are his symptoms?

"He hasn't any except weakness. He used to hold me on his lap by the hour, and now even the baby tires him"

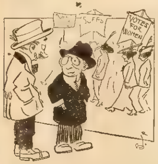
Ignorant of Anatomy.

When the butcher answered the telephone the shrill voice of a little girl greeted him·

"Hello! Is that Wilson?"

"Yes, Bessie" he answered kindly "What can I do for you"

"Oh, Mr. Wilson, please tell me where grandpa's liver is. The folks are out and I've got to put a hot flannel on it and I don't know where it is."



Micks—"Your wife was such an active supporter of women's suffrage I'm surprised to find her opposing it"

Wicks—"Well, you see, it's this way The housemaid's on a jury, the cook's running for alderwoman and her favorite dressmaker's quit the business and opened a billiard hall."

Modesty Explained.

The teacher was entertaining the school commissioners one afternoon

"That is one of my brightest pupils," she said, indicating a boy who was seated at one of the desks, intent upon writing. He is always busy studying while his companions are wasting their time out at pay. Morris," she said to the boy, "let me see what you are writing, please"

Morris reluctantly handed her the paper, and she read:

"Please excuse Morris from school today, as he is needed at home."

Speaking to Willie.

The father and mother and 8-year-old Willie were taking a short ocean voyage for the first time. Both parents were exceedingly seasick, but not so Willie He was having the time of his life. In low, weak tones the mother said:

"Father, I think you ought to speak to Willie."

Soon Willie came romping in, and between seasick moans the father said:

"H-o-w-d y—d-o W-il-lie"

The Waiter's Mistake.

"Waiter!"

"Yes, sir"

"What is this?"

"Oh, I'm sorry sir That's one of the manager's phonograph disks. Sorry it got mixed up with your plate of pancakes, sir. It's a mistake, sir."

It Would Come.

He was a young man—a candidate for an agricultural constituency—and he was sketching in glowing colors to an audience of rural voters the happy life the laborer would lead under an administration for the propagation of sweetness and light

"We have not yet three acres and a cow, but it will come. Old age pensions are still in the future, but they will come"

Similarly every item of his comprehensive program was indorsed by the same parrot cry Then he went on to talk of prison reforms

"I have not yet personally," he said "been inside a criminal lunatic asylum

Then there was a voice from the back of the hall: "But it will come."

Could Watch Him.

Poor little Potts strained his head in vain endeavors to see the stage The immobile back and great head of the man in front of him completely hid his view

By a most uncomfortable contortion he just managed to see some scenery occasionally by peeping over the man's shoulder Suddenly the big man turned

"What's the matter, matey? Can't you see anything?" he asked

"Can't even see a streak of the stage through you," murmured little Potts, pathetically

The big man grinned sarcastically

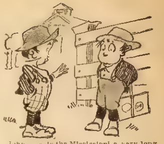
"Ah, well, son, just keep your eye on me and laugh when I do!"

Only One Chance.

They were walking in the moonlight on a romantic country road

"Nothing could ever come between us could it, dearest?" asked Claude, pensively

"I can't think of a single thing," replied Elsie, "unless I should become engaged to some other man"



John—"Is the Mississippi a very long river, Jimmie?"

Jimmie—"Gee, yes! It's so long I can't even spell it!"

Agreeably Surprised.

A burglar, in the act of breaking open a safe, was greatly astonished on raising his head to see a man intently watching his proceedings. He tried to escape, but the man stopped him, saying:

"Go on, my friend, I am deeply interested in your work."

"How so?" the thief inquired in great surprise

"Because I have lost the combination to this safe, and if you manage to open it you shall be handsomely rewarded for your trouble."

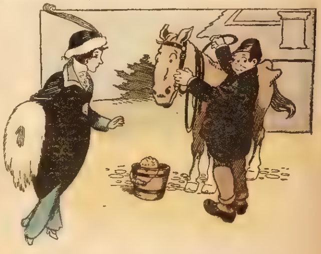
How it Happened.

"I believe our climate is changing."

"Think so?"

"Our winters seem to be getting warmer."

"Well, the women wouldn't wear enough clothes The climate had to change The women wouldn't."



Mistress—"Why do you drink, James? Even a horse knows too much to drink!"

Coachman—"A 'orse knows too much to get married, too, ma'am!"

The Actor's Favorite Role.

Girl (to prominent actor)—"I suppose there is some role you take special interest in."

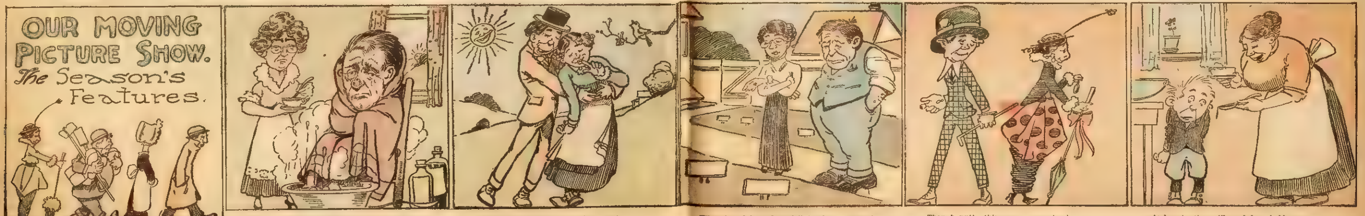
Actor—"Yes, my dear young lady—the pay roll."

Real Boss.

Wigg—"Young Bjones thinks he is a born leader"

Wagg—"Oh, many a fellow who thinks he was born to command marries a woman who was born to countermand."

IN SPRINGTIME DAYS


OUR MOVING PICTURE SHOW.
The Season's Features.

Now is the time when "pink-eye" hits the gay,

And lovesick couples wend their mushy way——

When hopeful gardens fail to show a sprout,

Though nutty things are seen about,

And springtime pills and dope hold sway

THE WHISPERING PINES

Or, A SOUTHLAND MYSTERY

By Constance Beatrice Willard

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Begun in No. 14, April 4. Subscriptions can begin with that issue or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER XV.

SEVERAL days passed rather uneventfully, until Sunday arrived. Boyd had told Charlie and Harry, and the three had shared the vigil, so the girls were not left unprotected. In addition, two deputy sheriffs had been installed, and yet each night some token of unknown visitors was left in Emily's bedroom. She refused to vacate it, although Boyd besought her to, for she did not want to alarm the others, and as yet neither the two visitors nor Miss Caroline had been told.

Saturday night Emily had retired a little late, and being very tired, had sunk into a deep sleep, from which she did not awaken until after eight o'clock. When she opened her eyes she gazed about her bedroom in astonishment. The furniture had all been thrown about, the drawers opened. In fact, from appearances, the whole room had been subjected to a thorough search, and she felt terrified.

"If this keeps up, I'll go back to Chicago," she said, as she tremblingly replaced everything, but even as she spoke, she knew she could not do that for some time to come. She had promised the girls a summer at Nags Head, and she felt she must marry them off in the fall, for she had decided that it would be about then they would want to have their double wedding.

She was still very pale when she went down to breakfast, but after she had swallowed several cups of strong coffee, her color came back. Breakfast was the last hot meal served on Sunday. Miss Caroline had spoken to Emily about this matter at the very first, explaining that if Emily really wanted a hot dinner, she would do violence to her religious scruples, otherwise she would have a substantial cold meal. Emily had insisted upon the latter, and now it was quite a matter of course.

"Though why it's worse to cook a hot dinner than a hot breakfast beats Miss Me," Winnie had confided to Nellie long before. Now they, too, were used to it.

After breakfast Miss Caroline went off to the Methodist Church, and Emily and the two girls to the little ivy-covered brick Episcopal Church, which set back behind its cedar trees as though retired from the world. Of course Charlie and Harry went to the same church, that is, they had changed from the Methodist and Presbyterian churches, respectively, since their devotion to Nellie and Winnie became fervid, and Boyd was junior warden therein. Emily had been baptized and confirmed there, and her parents had been buried from its doors, so she was attached to it.

The beautiful service was soothing to Emily's strained nerves, and she thought to herself that she had never seen any man look more saintly than Boyd as he passed the collection plate, although his face looked drawn and old, and there was additional silver over his temples. These past few days had told heavily upon him.

After the service followed what had seemed wonderfully strange to the two Chicago girls, although Emily had accepted it as a part of the old life, and that was the ranging of all the men in a double row outside the church. Down this row of masculinity all the ladies of the congregation were forced to walk. As his chosen lady passed him, each young man fell into step beside her, and to their credit be it said, no one, no matter how old or faded she might be, was allowed to go home alone, for before they thus grouped themselves, they had arranged which man was to be offered up on the altar of kindly feeling and courtesy.

Needless to say that Charlie and Harry fell into step with Nellie and Winnie, or that Boyd escorted Emily. He saw at once that she had something further to tell him, so was not surprised when she asked in a low voice:

"Can you come over this afternoon?"

"Surely."

"Come then about three," she begged, and then the conversation was general until the young men placed the ladies in their carriage, and stood bareheaded as they drove off.

"Isn't it perfectly elegant to see those dear boys stand bareheaded in the hot sun?" Winnie said, with a giggle, as they drove off.

"Southern gentlemen have the finest manners in the world," Nellie assented. "Don't you think so, Emily?"

"What is it, dear?" Emily asked. Her thoughts were far away from them just now.

"Such absent-mindedness bespeaks a heart distracted," Winnie suggested.

"Mine is," Emily said simply, but so sadly that both girls felt their eyes fill with tears.

"What is it, darling?" Winnie cried, while Nellie slipped her arm about Emily's shoulders.

"I think you know. It's my being divorced," she confessed, and she appreciated their not finding any fault with Boyd.

This little confidence affected their appetites to such an extent, however, that Miss Caroline went in dismay to her room to question her conscience as to whether it was worse to disobey the letter of the commandment, or to provide for her cousin and her guests a dinner they could not eat.

The two younger girls changed their dresses, putting on summer ones, for it was now very warm, and before three went out with Charlie and Harry to take the walk known as Lovers' Retreat, which was about half a mile from the house. Thus Emily was left alone, as she knew she would be, and she went into the big room and sat down to wait for Boyd. As she sank back in an easy chair, her eyes fell upon a little phonograph she had saved because it had been her uncle's. It was on top of her desk, and she had been intending to look over the records and see what kind of music had amused the lonely man.

Lonely, distracted by the many worries which were pressing upon her, she felt glad to handle anything that had belonged to those connected by blood ties with her, and so reverently she lifted it down to the table, and took up the dusty box of records.

Smiling a little, she put in the first which came to hand, and listened a little dreamily as an old-fashioned hymn ground out. It was one she had often heard, "Abide With Me," and yet it seemed to have a new message for her, and she laid it away. Cracked though the record was, and old-fashioned in make, it had evidently soothed her uncle, and she felt that she would never part with it. Others followed. Some were records of once popular songs which she had almost forgotten, and she was listening to "After the Ball," when Boyd came striding in, and she explained the presence of the phonograph as the last of this one-time favorite scraped out.

"Yes, I remember, he was very fond of his phonograph. Used to spend hours before it," Boyd said slowly. "It seems to me he wanted you to care for it, too, for I remember that one time I was here he asked me if I thought you cared for music. I told him that I didn't know. He said, if I remember distinctly:

"'I hope the little girl does, and I reckon she will some time look this over for the sake of her old uncle."

"Oh, Boyd, how could I neglect it so long?" Emily cried, her conscience reproaching her.

"No one could blame you," Boyd replied, "for your hands have been full all this time."

"I suppose so," Emily said absently, her fingers trifling with the little rolls, for this phonograph was one of the kind that took the cylinder records.

"What did you want to tell me?" Boyd asked abruptly. He could scarcely stand to be with Emily, seeing her look so depressed, and not try to soothe her.

"Oh, yes," Emily said, rousing herself. Quickly she told him of the new outrage, and he paced the floor as he listened.

"Emily, we are on the eve of some mighty discovery. What it is, I cannot tell, but there is a precious lot of knavery going on, and we are slowly rounding things up."

"Whom do you mean by we?"

"Perkins, a United States secret service man, and I."

"The mention of a secret service man recalls a circumstance I had nearly forgotten until the other day," Emily cried, and then she told him about the counterfeit her husband had given her.

"Do you connect him with passing them?" Boyd asked.

"I don't know. I never did understand, although I felt sure that he did not get those two ten-dollar bills from the tobacconist."

"Had that man any good qualities?" Boyd asked, the hatred he felt for the man showing in his voice.

"Yes, he had one good trait. He loved children. I always thought if he had had any, he might have been different. He would do anything for a child, and they all loved him. It is strange, isn't it? I have heard it said that some of the most desperate criminals love children and animals."

"I don't see why they cannot detect the real mettle," Boyd said abruptly.

"Perhaps they do. It may be they can reach below the outside covering, and get to the real man inside the shell of wickedness," and then as she felt the conversation was becoming strained, she idly placed another record in the machine.

At its first words she and Boyd both started, then she shut it off, and caught up the box in which it had lain.

"Look, Boyd, here are six. They are numbered. I wonder if they all are the same."

"Let this one run, and then put them on in their numbered order," Boyd cried, as excited as herself, and no wonder, for the record gave forth the voice of her dead uncle, and began:

"My darling Emily."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE beautiful Pasquotank running between heavily verdured banks to the Sound has no rival anywhere, and the girls had often admired it, but never fully appreciated its loveliness until they came into the spot known as Lovers' Retreat.

"What gave it this name?" Winnie asked, and Charlie answered:

"Because so many proposals have been made here," and then there was silence. Harry looked more stolid than ever, and Charlie more excited. The two girls blushed and dimpled under their hat brims, and the red waters of the river lapped the sandy shores.

"Sit down here," Charlie murmured to Nellie, indicating a half-submerged piece of timber

"How about jiggers?" Nellie asked, looking down at the proposed seat.

"No danger here. The juniper water kills all of them," Charlie replied, spreading his handkerchief on the seat

"Is it the juniper water that makes the water red?" Nellie asked, settling herself and looking along the river bank to a spot several yards distant where Harry was spreading his handkerchief for Winnie.

"Yes, but I don't want to talk about river water."

"No?" Nellie asked, looking up at him almost as coquettishly as Winnie herself.

"No, Miss Nellie, it is something mighty different. I know an angel like yourself can never love a poor no-account fellow like me, now, can you? But I do love you, Miss Nellie, and I certainly would try to make you happy."

There was silence for a moment, then Charlie asked timidly, very differently from his usual manner:

"Could you ever learn to love me, Miss Nellie? Just a little, tiny bit."

Nellie looked up at him very frankly, as she said simply:

"You ought to know I do—but wait," as he bent toward her rapturously.

"What is it, sweetheart?" he cried, his adoration shining from his every feature.

"There is something I want you to know. I have been a chorus girl," and she looked tragic.

"Why, I have known that for a long, long time. Boyd Fletcher told me. He said that you had been so brave and good and had struggled so hard, and that it ought to make a man love you all the more, and it certainly has me," and he bent his head and pressed a kiss very reverently upon the little hand he took in his own, and Nellie realized what a good friend Boyd had been to her, preparing the mind of this kindly Southern gentleman so that what might have been a blemish was turned into a virtue.

"Some people do not regard it that way?" Nellie said, with moist eyes.

"No one who knows you, darling, could think any other way, anyhow," was the prompt reply, and then they wandered on into the talk so dear to lovers, trying to fix the exact time when each realized that the other was becoming more than an acquaintance.

In the meanwhile, Harry and Winnie sat and looked out on the soft flowing water, that was so beautiful in color. Finally Harry said quietly:

"I reckon you like this place."

"I do."

"Ever think of going back to Chicago?"

"Sometimes," and she gave a little shiver.

"Don't you want to go?"

"I hate even to think of it"

"Don't."

"Don't what?"

"Think of it."

"I'll have to, some day, Mr. Graham. Emily will get tired of me after a while. Then, too, she'll want to have other friends down here. This has been a grand chance for me, seeing something so different, although I've not done much work. Then there is a delightful summer down at that little watering place—Nags Head, I think you call it. We are to be there with Emily. After that——" and she sighed.

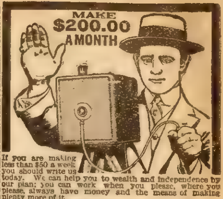
"Don't,' Harry repeated softly.

"Don't what?" she asked once more.

"Go away."

"But I can't stay here always."

"Why not, Miss Winnie?"



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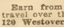

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"Emily will get tired of me. I tell you."

"But I won't," Harry said as stolidly as ever, but there was an expression in his eyes that said much more than his halting tongue ever could.

Winnie's bright eyes drooped, her voice quivered a little, as she said softly:

"That's nice of you to say that."

"No, it isn't nice."

"Why not?" Winnie's mouth began to twitch in a smile.

"Don't laugh at me, Miss Winnie. I can't say what I want to," and he raised himself to his feet and looked off, toward the farther shore. He had rehearsed what he wanted to tell her so many times, and now it seemed terrible he could not get it out.

"What is it you want me to know?" Winnie asked gently.

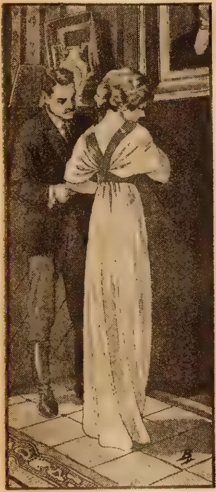
"That I want you to stay here with me," he blurted out.

"Do you really?"

"Yes, I do."

"Then come back here and tell me about it," she begged, holding out her hand.

As though it were a bit of a spar in the midst of an ocean of perplexity, Harry grasped it, and seemed to come to the surface as he gasped:



Disclosing a narrow stair of stone.

"I love you."

"Do you?" Winnie asked tenderly, although this was no news to her. She had known it for some weeks and rejoiced in the fact.

"I couldn't help it," he confessed gloomily.

"Too bad!" she commiserated.

"Why?" he asked, looking at her in such anguish that she relented, and nestling up to him she whispered:

"You darling! Why you dear old dummy, don't you know I love you every bit as much as you do me?" and then she had the surprise of her life, for Harry, stupid, dull, slow-moving Harry, forgetting the time and place, or that others could see him, caught her to him and kissed her not once, but several times before she could free herself.

"My but you are strong!" she said admiringly, laughing up at him.

"Ain't there a song about being 'Strong for You'?" Harry asked, with a grin, and Winnie began to appreciate the developing effects of love upon a quiet, undemonstrative man.

Back along the river bank Charlie was confessing to Nellie:

"I haven't made much of my life, anyhow, just rambled along, drinking too much, but from now on, sweetheart, I'm going to try and make you mighty proud of me," and she had clung to his hand and felt that Heaven had been very good indeed to give her the love of this gallant gentleman.

"How is it, though," she asked wonderingly, "that you could care for me when there is Winnie?"

"I never noticed Miss Winnie much; I had to keep looking at you," he confessed.

At the same time Harry was asking Winnie:

"How come you to love me when Charlie was around?"

"Why, Harry, you ought to know that two such scatter-brains as Charlie and I never could get along together. Grave, dear little Nellie will suit him. She will temper his wild spirits, just as you will mine."

"No," Harry said decidedly.

"What?"

"I won't."

"Won't what, dear boy?"

"Temper your spirits."

"Why, foolish?"

"Because they are just right now," he replied stoutly, and she could not shake him in his decision.

Finally, however, they had to join each other, these two couples, and the girls flew toward each other and kissed, while the men shook hands, and then they adjourned to a little cabin, where an old negro mammy served them with delicious corn pone and fried middlin', that they ate as though famished, washing their meal down with great draughts of the native Yapon tea, sweetened with molasses. In the early twilight they strolled back to the old home, knowing nothing of what had taken place there that eventful afternoon.

CHAPTER XVII

EMILY felt herself trembling as she heard the words, "My darling Emily," and when they were repeated, she held her breath as the record gave forth the imprisoned voice of the man now dead. "I reckon when you hear this, if you ever do, that I will be in my grave. If you are the girl I think you are, you-all will not let your old uncle's plaything be thrown away, and some day you will get this message."

For an instant she shut off the voice to whisper:

"Oh, Boyd, I'm frightened."

"I'm here," he returned, and comforted, she released the record once more.

"I'm taking this way to pass on to you the family mystery," the kind old voice said. "It's only right you-all should know it, though if I could I'd spare you. If you-all do as I reckon you will, the old part will be used again, and some day you may need just this knowledge.

"As you-all may have heard this old part was built in 1750. It was intended as a place of refuge from the Indians, and a general massacre was prevented because of the mighty good arrangements of it."

Once more Emily shut off the record to gáze inquiringly at Boyd, but he motioned her to go on.

"It was during the Revolution, however, that its efficiency was first thoroughly tested. Unfortunately, the man then owning it, the son of the founder, and your great-grandfather was a young man whose sympathies were with England. He played his cards so well, however, that he passed for a patriot, while secretly aiding the loyal cause, and was given a large amount of gold for his treachery. His part never leaked out, however; he lived to be a very old man, and your grandfather was the son of his old age.

"During the early fifties, he had his finger on the pulse of the times. He knew mighty well how matters were trending, and I reckon could have told those at Washington many things they never dreamed of. He had married for the second time—his first marriage had been childless—and your father and I were born of it. In front of the old historic part he put up the present new addition, closing up the old part, declaring it not fit to live in."

Here the record came to an abrupt end. Emily was trembling so she could not move, but Boyd removed the record, and put on the one numbered two. Instantly the narrative was resumed.

"He laid well his plans. Every cent he could rake and scrape together, and he certainly did command vast resources, was invested in goods likely to be required by a blockaded port. These he stored away in a place I will describe later."

"But what part does this old part bear to this?" Emily cried, clasping her hands over her heart.

"Have patience, Emily," he said gently. "I told you we were on the verge of a discovery, how near I did not then appreciate. I think this message from your uncle will explain many things."

"You do?" she breathed.

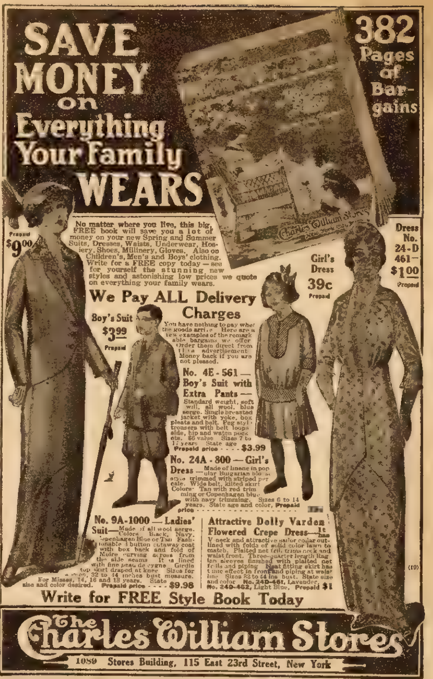
He nodded, and released the record.

"In the years that followed a mighty nation was divided. Brothers fought against brothers. You know the history better than I can tell you.

"Suffice to say that when the blockade was heaviest, his goods were smuggled in, and he reaped an immense profit. All this while, though, he posed as a strong Union man, just as his father had as a patriot during the Revolution. He was a man well into the fifties, and ought to have had a higher sense of honor, but he profited by his neighbors' needs, betrayed his country's trust, and became a rich man."

Here Boyd was forced to insert the third record.

"Your father and I were but lads, and knew nothing of this, but in the early eighties when a high tariff was the issue, he took us into his confidence, told us the history of this old house, and asked for our co-operation, for he was growing too old to do the business alone. Then it was that your father refused to have anything to do with the matter, and was cast out into the world with your mother and you."



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"Dear daddy!" Emily whispered.

"I temporized. In your youth and inexperience, Emily, perhaps you-all will judge your old uncle harshly, but I felt that no good would be accomplished by leaving, that much might be by remaining. Whether I succeeded or not, it is mighty hard to say, but at any rate no one was harmed, and the vast wealth he had accumulated melted away because I would not help to carry out his plans You-all can use the little I have left you, for it has been honestly earned from the land bought with clean money before your great-grandfather engaged in unworthy speculation."

"Thank goodness for that!" Emily breathed.

"And now I want to touch upon something else, which may hurt you-all.

The record stopped Some contained more than others as gaps in the conversation showed that the old man had studied out carefully what he was saying. Boyd put in the fourth, trusting that none of the story was missing.

"I never intended that you-all should leave Beth Town. Why you did I have never known, but I am sure it was a mighty good reason that sent you away."

Instinctively Boyd's hand stopped the record, and his eyes sought Emily's. For an instant the two exchanged glances, then Emily's eyes sank. They knew why she had gone. Once more the record was released, and the voice went on:

"I kept a watch over you, after all. More than once I contemplated going to Chicago after my little girl, then I reckon my laziness prevented."

Boyd stopped it long enough to whisper:

"It was his rheumatism that crippled him all up," before he let it go on.

"After you freed yourself from that scoundrel, he came down here, and I found him rifling my desk" Emily gave a low exclamation.

"I reckon he got hold of some family history in it, for he made me an infamous proposition concerning it, worse than any entertained by any of your forbears, and ill as I was, I threw him out of doors. Watch out for that man, Emily. Never let him get into your life again, for——"

The whirring grind showed that the rest of the sentence must be on the next, and Boyd put it in.

"—He will only work you-all harm," the story went on.

"Let me warn you explicitly against him and his kind. If Boyd Fletcher and you ever come to love each other," the two gazed despairingly at each other, but neither said a word, and the message was ground on:

"—Do not refuse him. Emily, he is a gallant gentleman, who will protect you-all as you ought to be. I do not consider your union with that wretch a marriage at all. I hope you and Boyd will grow to love each other. For this reason I have asked that you live here in this old house. I have also asked that it be not rented. Our family shame must not be given to the world. I have destroyed all papers. The only record of the family secret is traced on these phonograph cylinders. I leave it to your own good sense to decide just what had better be done in the matter.

"The last record contains an explanation of the mystery. Act wisely, little girl, more so than those who have gone before you-all.

"Perhaps I have not acted wisely in putting the matter in this form, but it has pleased me to do so, to make a test as it were of the love you-all may bear your kin folks."

As the last words ground out, Boyd's eager fingers took it out, and replaced it with the last one

"The secret of this family lies in the fact that there is an underground passage leading from the old part to the river. By means of it men and supplies were easily transported without discovery. Owing to the fact that the old part lies in another county, this secret was all the more valuable. The middle of the passage is directly beneath the pine grove." Here Emily gave a great start.

"There is an entrance into this grove, and in its very center. This impassable grove afforded an unsurpassed storage place for supplies. The entrance to the underground passage is from the old part of the house, through the chimney.

"Count the nails from the two narrow-paned windows, until you reach the tenth, then press hard."

Thus the record ended. There was nothing more distinct although the record ran some revolutions further. Emily gazed, white-faced and wan-eyed at Boyd, while he whispered:

"You were right, Emily, there is something in the middle of that grove." Then, hand in hand, they approached the chimney. Tremblingly they counted the big-headed nails in the wainscoting until they reached the tenth. Breathlessly Emily pressed it with all her strength, and slowly, yet very readily, as though moving on well-oiled hinges, the massive chimneypiece swung apart, disclosing a narrow pair of stairs of stone, almost as steep as a ladder, running back of the real fireplace

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* * *

The Sword-Maker's Daughter.

(Continued from page three.)

"And you will find me waiting," she answered. "Together we will sing the song of redemption on the hills of peace."

He was loath to leave her. There was doubt in his soul, not doubt of her love, but of the future. At length he bestowed upon her a last embrace and hurried away. He heard the door close behind her, and felt the sound echo in his heart like the knell of doom.

Aimee turned back into the sword-room and dropped into a chair. Her face was strangely white. There was a tremor in her slender hands, and her heart beat wildly. What meant Leon's last words: "If I live"?

He had never spoken thus before. There had never been a dread of long absence. She was glad she had not told him of Jean Artois. It would have caused Leon to seek out this young wolf, and Jean was accounted a perfect swordsman. They might meet somewhere, and Leon might fall before the thrust of this man who wanted to possess her for purposes of his own.

All at once her eye caught sight of something that lay on the floor at her feet. It was a strange little ball, and she gazed at it some moments before attempting to take it up. How had it come there?

Aimee picked it up and leaned toward the light. It was like one of the marbles she had seen the street gamins play with in Paris. She turned it over and over with her hands.

In an instant her face went ashen again. There was a number on the smooth surface of the tiny sphere. It had not come there by chance, for there was no such thing. Some hand had traced the "3" upon the ball.

Then all at once Aimee thought of secret cabals. France was full of them. She remembered how, not long before, the tyrants of the Revolution had broken up a plot to destroy them through the discovery of the conspirators' nest in which they found marked balls in a box.

Almost crushing the little sphere in her hand, she arose and tottered across the room. The ball must have fallen from Leon's pocket. Ah! she remembered the withdrawal of the kerchief. It was all clear now. Then back to her came the selection of the sword. Leon had chosen the best and finest tempered one in the armory.

At that moment her father glided into the room. Aimee whirled upon him with a piercing cry. She held out her hand with the marked ball, number upward, in her white palm.

"Look! look!" she exclaimed "The ball of death! Leon left it here a moment ago. He courts the fate of Corday Leon! Leon!" and with a wailing cry she fell in a heap at her father's feet.

This capital story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you if you send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

Fancy Drinks.

"Say!" remarked the young man who could sing all the latest songs if he was allowed to, and who wore all the latest in clothes and was up-to-date generally, "did you ever drink a seafoam sally? It's great!"

"What is a seafoam sally?" asked the undertaker. "One of those fancy soda fountain drinks?"

"Yes. It's a humdinger."

"And what is a humdinger?"

"A seafoam sally costs fifteen cents. It is made of strawberry ice cream, vanilla ice cream, sherbet, crushed ice, and a cherry."

"That reminds me of a drink I got one day," said the undertaker. "I was thirsty and went to the soda fountain, but couldn't see anything on the bill of fare that looked like a drink. The names all looked like popular songs or novels or silver polish or something.

"Up and down the list I went while the girl waited. Finally I ordered a fiddle-dee-dee or something that sounded like patent underwear. But I had to take a chance.

"They brought me the darnedest thing you ever saw! You wouldn't have known it was a drink if you hadn't seen the straw in it. The straw was the only recognizable thing, so I grabbed it like a drowning man. That's how I escaped. The straw wouldn't work. That conglomeration was so crazy looking that the straw wouldn't take a chance on it, so I wouldn't either."

"What did you do? Leave it?"

"No, indeed. There was a fellow across the table from me who was reading the paper and hadn't seen the dish the girl had set in front of him. So I took his and slid mine over in front of him. His was a flubdub."

"What's that?"

"A composition of calves' foot jelly and toothpaste, flavored with ground canton flannel. It was pretty good. But you ought to have seen the fellow with the newspaper when he discovered what was in front of him. First he looked at it casually. Then he laid down his paper and observed it closely. Then he put his elbows on the table and looked.

"I arose and softly went my way while he was digging into the stuff with his spoon to see what he could discover."

* * *

Afraid.

An old colored man, charged with stealing chickens, was arraigned in court and was incriminating himself when the judge said.

"You ought to have a lawyer. Where's your lawyer?"

"Ah ain't got no lawyer, Jedge," said the old man.

"Very well, then," said his honor, "I'll assign a lawyer to defend you."

"Oh, no, sah; no, sah! Please don't do dat!" the darky begged.

"Why not?" asked the judge. "It won't cost you anything. Why don't you want a lawyer?"

"Well, Jedge. Ah'll tell you, suh," said the old man, waving his tattered old hat confidentially. "Hit's jest dis way—Ah wan' tuh enjoy them chickens mahsse'f!"

* * *

Ticklish.

A tourist in Ireland, driving along a country road, drew the jarvey's attention to a miserable looking tatterdemalion and remarked:

"What a shocking thing it is to see a man in such rags and misery."

"Begorra, then, your honor," replied the driver, with the characteristically Irish desire to put a good face on everything, "that's not from poverty at all, at all. The truth is that the man's so ticklesome that sorra a tailor in the county can attempt to take his measure."

* * *

Very High.

A Boston school-teacher had been explaining to her class about the three kingdoms of nature—the animal, the mineral and the vegetable. When she had finished she said to the class:

"Now, who can tell me what the highest degree of animal life is?"

At this a little girl in a rear row of seats raised her hand and replied:

"The highest degree of animal life is the giraffe."

Don't Trifle With Your Health!

—it is too precious a possession. It is trifling to neglect the little every-day kind of ailments. It is trifling, too, to take medicines of unknown or doubtful ingredients. If your stomach gets out of order, your food is not digested and, of course, your blood gets thin and you become weak, ready to be a prey to the disease germs always ready to attack the run-down and the anaemic. If your liver can't do its work, your blood becomes impure and many troubles follow. If your bowels are irregular, poisons accumulate in your body.

DR. PIERCE'S GOLDEN MEDICAL DISCOVERY

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Now a Well and Happy Woman

"I took La Grippe—had terrible pain in my side, and the doctor said one lung was affected," writes *Mrs. S. Taylor*, of Arnold, Kansas, Route 1. "I commenced using 'Medical Discovery.' Was in bed five weeks. Had cold sweats and was like one who was dying. I did not think I would ever get strong again. I used 'Golden Medical Discovery' for about five months, and now I am strong and have no cough of any kind. We used Dr. Pierce's medicines in the family for a number of years, but this winter I tried them myself and they are all that they are claimed to be. I cannot praise them enough, and hope anyone using these remedies will not give up. I often thought of doing so myself because I was so weak and discouraged but thanks to Dr. Pierce's family medicines I am a well and happy woman."

Mrs. Taylor

The Sportsman's Primer

By Norman H. Crowell

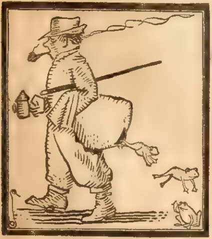
FROG CATCHING

FROGS are small green insects that spend their summers at the pondside. In appearance they resemble a small slab of green hide stretched over the interior of a frog.

Possessing the salient characteristics of the flea and the kangaroo, the frog differs from these two pests in being of a nautical cast of countenance. The frog is a hardy annual, and notwithstanding his constant exposure to conditions peculiarly inimical to diseases of the pulmonary organs, a consumptive frog has never yet been introduced into polite society.

The frog possesses a retreating, almost stampeding, forehead. This handicap he overcomes by preserving a grim and studious air that would draw tears of envy to a professor of psychology.

The frog's chief aim in life is to serve as a disguise for fish hooks—a role at which they have never been equalled and seldom beaten. A small number two frog will conceal a three-inch cast-iron anchor about his person and look a big blonde pickerel square in the eye with a smile that never fails to win his entire confidence. The pickerel unhooks his lower jaw and cordially closes down upon the frog. The next instant he draws a deep breath and experiences that tired feeling so noticeable in the happy bee-stung bullcalf. He makes an attempt to emit the frog, but at this stage of the game the freckled lad in the torn overalls wakes up and sags back on the pole. The day ends sadly but gloriously for Mr. Pickerel.



"Percolates through a hole."

Another function which is admirably performed by the frog is in satisfying the steady demand for hind legs. Frog's post-mortem attachments are second only to a mess of seal flipper or elephant foot as a table delicacy.

In the pursuit of frog's legs the entire frog is often seriously, if not permanently, discommoded, but, the frog-hunter must have a heart of steel and a toad-stabber of iron. No chicken-hearted person exists in the frog-catching business.

There are many ways of gathering this fruit. Being an aquatic animal, an attempt to run him down in an automobile is manifestly impracticable. The auto is useful only when a large, tawny specimen happens to stray into the public highway.

It is exceedingly difficult to gain a frog's confidence by patting him on the eyelashes and otherwise caressing him. He is loaded to the chin with suspicion of the most virulent order, and rarely permits familiarities from persons who fail to furnish references of the highest kind.

A frog with a nickel's worth of brains will instantly detect the intentions of a man who wades into his horizon with a wild glare in his eyes and a fork-handle clutched in his fist. Curiosity may hold him until the man has expectorated on his hands and is swinging the fork-handle aloft. Then a sound not unlike dropping a custard pie down a well signals the departure of froggie for parts unknown to the plaintiff.

To be a successful frog-hunter one must devote his early life assiduously to the cultivation of skill and dexterity, backed by a digestion capable of sustaining long-continued fasts. A smattering of Latin and Greek roots is also a necessary adjunct to this precarious calling. The ordinary language is not complete enough.

To deceive an adult frog requires a degree of intelligence impossible to describe in the limits of this article. Suffice it to say that there are occasional individuals who are so proficient in their chosen calling that they are enabled to lure froggie by squatting in the edge of the horsepond and making a noise like a mossy stump. These persons, however, are extremely rare.

The coarse, commercial froggist arises betimes (in this instance at about 4:22½ a. m.) and girds up his loins with an old gunny sack. His further paraphernalia consists of a dark lantern and a section of buggy whip. Armed with these, he descends upon the haunts of his slippery game and proceeds to business with the passionate enthusiasm of youth.

He sneaks quietly along the edge of the pond, the lantern illuminating the desert and the waste places with a flood of light. Presently he descries two fiery eyes protruding from the forward end of a large envy-tinted frog of the bull variety. Craftily he steals forward with his eyes riveted upon the clammy form of his victim. Swish! goes the buggy-whip—a sickening thud and the deed is done and recorded in the office of the Register.

The frog is next carefully separated from the mud and dropped into the gunny sack, where he soon recovers consciousness and crawls to a hole in one corner, through which he percolates. The hunter stalks grimly on and many a frog falls before his unerring aim and goes to his long home, i. e., the sack.

An hour or two later the hunter starts suspiciously and rams his arm into the yawning depths of the gunny sack. Then he hurriedly unslings the sack and inserts his head into its cavernous regions. A moment later he emerges enveloped in a lilac-tinted cloud of ribald conversation, accompanied by a villainous glare at the myriads of inquiring optics that have suddenly risen to the surface of the pond.

It is too true—too horribly true—and with a gasping sob the froggist presses his hand to his fevered brow and staggers wearily homeward.

Next morning the frogs are up and in fine working condition again, ready and eager to be slugged and captivated, a proceeding which is, no doubt, a welcome break in the monotony of their lives.

* * *

HORSE RACING

HORSE racing is popularly supposed to be a game of chance. This is erroneous. In horse racing you have no chance at all. Like the strong arm, the hold-up, and the old army game you are skinned before you commence.

Take the unsuspecting corn-fed pedestrian on the morning of Derby Day. He arises early with a terra cotta taste in his mouth and a roll in his vest pocket that would suffocate a hippopotamus. He has a ticket in his hat that says "Gimlet" will romp off with the race like a tramp with the family wash. He paid out twenty bucks to get hold of the ticket.

He reaches the track under a cloud of smoke from a "Perfecto Rankadoro," and swells up to the betting-ring like a bull-turkey with ingrowing eyesight. He bets the roll. Then the scene changes. The storm curtain runs down, the lights go out and some one works the thunder machine. All is dark—for "Gimlet" never had a look-in. Late at night the pedestrian sneaks upstairs behind a breath that reminds his wife of a clove factory. Race horses are subdivided into two great classes—ringers and dead ones. A ringer is the horse that is quoted at about 30 to 1, and when the race comes off the jockey pulls both arms out of the socket to keep him from running away from the field. Ringers are made, not born. A ringer is constructed by painting a black tail white, or vice versa, and whitewashing the legs from the knees down. By this simple expedient a 2:10 animal can sneak into 2:20 races and lug off the root of evil. No one will be the wiser—except the judges.

Dead ones are horses that fail to win every race they go into. If a horse wins every race for a month and loses one, he is promptly tagged a dead one.

A favorite is a horse that is scheduled to win. He is supposed to be capable of beating the other plugs to a light green froth. Before placing any large wagers on a favorite it is wise to examine the animal when he is brought onto the track. If he steps high and wide like an old lady hunting burglars with a lamp, stay away—he has partaken freely of soothing syrup. If he breathes like a pig under a gate, feel in his nose and you will discover a fine new bath sponge. Take it home as a souvenir.

Many tricks are resorted to in order to make a horse go a few seconds faster than he really can. Some astute jockeys slip a currycomb under their saddle at the beginning of the homestretch and it helps lots. A horse that is being hopelessly distanced will rouse up and jump right over the horses in front by employing this innocent little tactic.

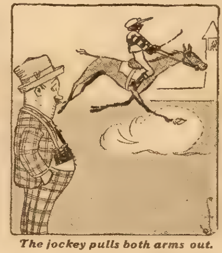
Many horse owners refuse to start animals in races because of the betting. Many bettors refuse to bet on certain races because of the finishing. It is a stand off.

Some men use systems in betting. There is only one sure system that absolutely prevents loss. This is as follows: after betting $100 that "Ripsaw" will win, go around and bet another $100 that "Ripsaw" will lose. In this way you can bet twice as much and come out about even on the day's work.

In choosing a winner the novice will be greatly aided by a careful consideration of the following advice: After selecting a horse from the entry list ascertain if the animal has ever been in a race before. If he has, find out whether he won or lost. If he won, it is advisable to pass him up, as the chances are against a repetition. If he lost, he probably was no good then and hasn't improved any since, so cut him out.

Next find out who owns him. If it is some one you know, it is dollars to doughnuts you know the man to be a crook and will steer clear of his entry. If some stranger owns the nag, be wary—he is undoubtedly a sharper trying to work a cold deck on you. Keep the garter on your roll and your hand on your watch.

After satisfying yourself in these matters it is advisable to take a squint at the horse. You may have to do this through a knot-hole in the stable. Be very careful not to get horse liniment squirted into your eye. Observe his legs—if he has four, credit him with one point. If he has less than four, hang onto your money.



The jockey pulls both arms out.

Next inspect the blanket on the horse. If it is a fine, costly affair you can safely plunge on the beast. If it is faded and worn out, button up your cash drawer.

When the horse comes onto the track watch how he lifts his feet. If they come up slowly the horse is a dead one; if they come up with a snap the animal is too nervous and unreliable. If they do not come up at all, ten chances to two he is standing perfectly still.

Observe closely the horse's tail. If it droops like a wet mop hanging out of a kitchen window he will finish in about eighth place. If it sticks out horizontally, the chances are much better, but if it is vertical you can bet your last simoleon he has been red-peppered and will run like a scared cat up a telephone pole.

Don't throw your clothes into the air and yell just because your horse is a few rods to the good at the head of the stretch. You haven't figured on the jockey's pull. If the jockey is a first-class one he may make your animal look like an ice wagon going to Sunday school.

Don't ruin a $3 hat because you win a $2 bet. Don't bet much. Don't bet.

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An Alarmed Dentist.

A man the other day went to a Boston dentist to have a tooth extracted, and decided to take gas. The doctor administered the gas, and the man soon appeared to be under its influence, but he continued to keep one eye open. This worried the doctor, and he gave the man more gas; still the eye remained open.

"Shut that eye," said the doctor finally, losing patience.

"Can't," said the man in a drowsy voice; "it's glass."

A Ruined Bridegroom.

A young Alabama bridegroom asked the clergyman who had just married him what the fee would be.

"Oh, well," said the latter, not knowing the young man's circumstances, "you can pay me whatever you think it's worth."

Turning, the young fellow looked his bride over from head to foot, and then rolling his eyes, he replied mournfully:

"Why, sah, you has ruined me for life, you has for sure."

Injustice of Jealousy.

A young married couple were happy in their little six-months-old child. One day as the baby lay in its crib the mother observed the father bending over and apparently intently looking at the little one. Watching him for some minutes she thought, "He does love baby. He loves baby a great deal."

Then a little later she thought, "Why, he loves baby better than he does me." This thought was too much and she went into the next room. As the husband heard the swish of her skirts he looked up and said, "I don't see how they can make a crib like that for $3.98." And her jealous fears vanished.

Easier Than He Thought.

"G-g-good evening," said the young man who had come to speak to the young girl's father.

"Good evening," said the father. "You look a little nervous. How do you feel?"

"Flattered," said the young man. "I was afraid I looked scared to death."

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Chicago Ledger

Entered as second-class matter June 25, 1885, at the postoffice at Chicago, Illinois, under act of March 3, 1879.

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1,250,000
COPIES WEEKLY.

PEPPERS

GENTLE JABS

Good talkers are usually poor quitters.

Do you try to do those you are dunned by?

Many a husband is a sorry ex-bachelor.

Don't pass your worries on: chloroform them.

Gossip is a deadly gas that is fatal to friendship.

A brunette may be fairer than a blonde in some ways.

If a man would be honest he must keep in training.

A man who is satisfied with himself does not want much.

An ounce of boost more than discounts a pound of obituary.

Success seldom comes to a man who is too lazy to go after it.

Nearly all wise men are married That is how they got their wisdom.

The easiest thing for a man to acquire is old age—if he lives long enough

If you have a skeleton in your closet you are lucky if you can keep it there

There is as much kicking in baseball as there is in football, but it's different.

A lazy man may shut his eyes when looking for work and bark his shins on it.

It is well enough to be a thinker, but too often the man who thinks does nothing else.

It's rather difficult for an easy-going man to keep people from using him for a door mat.

Most girls would rather pound a piano in the parlor than pound a beefsteak in the kitchen.

If you don't believe a woman can keep a secret, just ask her age of one on the shady side of 30.

Do you remember how your plans went up in smoke when you started out to set the world on fire?

There might be danger of another deluge if women could only weep for a purpose without getting their noses red.

It's just like a woman to begin figuring on how she will celebrate her silver wedding before she has been married two weeks.

Every married man believes that the household expenses could be cut in two if he only had a chance to turn his business acumen loose on the job.

A proud Ohio father was surprised to find that his first born weighed twenty-five pounds. He made the mistake of weighing it on the iceman's scales.

Chose the Drink.

As a lecturer on his experiences, Archibald Forbes was very popular, and he was fond of recounting an experience of his debut in that capacity at Leven, Fifeshire. As the story has not been told in the papers, it may be conveniently done now. With a thumping heart, the new lecturer appeared at the hall door shortly before the starting time at eight o'clock, and not wishing to crush through a great audience on his way to the platform, he asked the hallkeeper to conduct him to a side door.

"Ye needna mind," replied that functionary, not unkindly, "there's no crood!"

When Forbes entered the hall he had to admit that the keeper was quite correct. There was not a single soul present! After a bit, however, a man strolled in, and calmly proceeded to choose a seat. It seems he was a commercial traveler, putting up at the place for the night, who had found time hanging heavily on his hands. Nobody else coming, Forbes said to the "audience": "Will you have the lecture or will you have a drink?

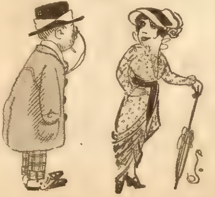
"A drink," said the traveler.

It Might Be Worse.

One afternoon Mrs. Murphy appeared at the settlement house, all dressed up in her best bonnet and shawl. A huge black and blue spot disfigured one side of her face, however, and one eye was nearly closed.

"Why, Mrs. Murphy, what is the matter?" cried one of the teachers, and then, realizing that she might have asked a tactless question, she hastily turned it off by saying: "Well, cheer up, you might be worse off."

"Sure an' I might," responded the indignant Mrs. Murphy. "I might not be married at all!"



Percy Pettipate—"My cousin is a wonderful microscopic writer. He engraved the entire poem of 'Mary's Little Lamb' on a pinhead."

Polly Pickles—"And did he take that liberty with you?"

A Quick-Witted Boy.

Elihu Root tells a story about himself and his efforts to correct the manners of his office boy. One morning the young autocrat came into the office, and, tossing his cap at a hook, exclaimed:

"Say, Mr. Root, there's a ball game down at the park today and I want to go down."

Now the great lawyer was willing that the boy should go, but thought he would teach him a little lesson in good manners.

"James," he said, "that isn't the way to ask a favor. Now, you sit down in my chair and I'll show you how to do it properly."

The boy took the office chair and his employer picked up his cap and stepped outside. He then opened the door softly, and, holding the cap in his hand, said quietly to the small boy in the big chair:

"Please, sir, there is a ball game at the park today; if you can spare me I would like to get away for the afternoon."

In a flash the boy responded:

"Why, certainly, Jimmie; and here is fifty cents to pay your way in."

Reminding Them.

Alfred was having one of his "bad" days, and upon coming to the table began to cry. He was sent to the kitchen to wait until the family had finished.

Several minutes afterward, when the incident was forgotten by all but small Alfred, the kitchen door opened softly and a small red head and a pair of dancing eyes, but a very serious little face, was thrust in to the diningroom, while a very pathetic little voice said: "Anybody here call Alfred?"

A Resourceful Wife.

The young housekeeper was troubled. "Oh, dear!" she exclaimed. "That horrid groceryman never sends me what I want."

"What seems to be the trouble now, darling?" asked the fond husband, with tender anxiety

"Well, the Browns are coming to dinner tonight, and I was going to have asparagus vinaigrette. The recipe in my cook book says that the bleached kind of asparagus should be used, and the grocer has sent me this nasty fresh green kind. What shall I do?"

"Can't you telephone to the grocery and have them change the order?"

"No, it's too late. Oh, I'll tell you! Run over to the corner drug store and get a bottle of peroxide, and I'll bleach it myself!"

"What a resourceful little wife I have!" he murmured proudly, as he reached for his hat.

Their Rates.

A young man who was with a party of motor tourists making a trip through the mountains decided to stop over in an attractive place for a few days, and went into the hotel to ascertain the rates

"What are your rates?" he inquired.

"Seven dollars a day, sir," was the reply.

"If I stay," went on the man, "I shall want a room on the parlor floor."

"That will cost you one dollar extra," said the clerk.

"I shall also want a room with a fireplace where I can have a fire these chilly evenings."

"One dollar more, sir."

"And, of course," said the tourist, "I want one with a bath also."

"A dollar additional, sir."

"Well," said the man, thoughtfully, "how much will you charge to let me leave the hotel just as I am?"

What Was the Matter?

It was on the Auguste Victoria, homeward bound, that two Americans, a Frenchman, and an Englishman were discussing the relative value of European and American waiters, with the balance much in favor of the transatlantic variety. To illustrate his point, the American related the experience of a New Yorker in a Broadway cafe, whose bill of fare afforded a choice of mince pie, cherry pie, custard pie and apple.

"You may bring me," said the guest, "a piece of apple, of cherry, and of custard pie."

"Well," ejaculated the waiter, "what is the matter with the mince pie, sor?"

After the laugh had subsided, the Englishman leaned across the table. "Beg pardon, Dr. Smith, but what was the matter with the mince pie?"

Near Enough.

The late Mayor Gaynor, at a luncheon in Brooklyn, praised the many wholesome attractions and amusements of New York.

"New York," said he, "is not one of those cities where the citizens have no place to go but back to work. Nor is it like a wretched town that a limited express was obliged to pull up at one evening.

A passenger on this express, putting his head out of the widow, said to a native:

"My friend, what is the name of this dismal, dried-up, Heaven-forsaken hole?"

"'That's near enough,' the dejected native answered. 'That's near enough. Let her go at that.'"

In a Hurry.

A man called at the postoffice the other day and asked for the postmaster. He was told by the clerk that the postmaster was not in.

"When will he be in?" was asked.

The postmaster would be in within half an hour. "Is there anything I can do for you?" the clerk asked.

"No; I want to see the postmaster."

After a while the man came back and asked again for the postmaster.

"He's not back yet," the clerk told him. "Is there anything I can do for you, or can I tell him anything when he comes?"

"No, there ain't nuthin' you can do, and I wisht the postmaster was here. I want to see if there's any mail for me, and I'm gettin' in a hurry."

They Expected It.

Secretary Daniels, discussing an argument against his navy policy, laughed and said at a luncheon at Washington:

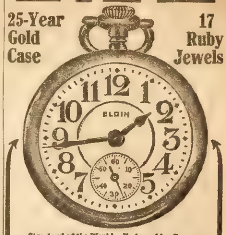
"My opponent is stinging in a polite way. He is like the bishop.

"A bishop, at a certain congress, spoke, and at the close of his address the audience began to disperse.

"A gentleman who was down on the program for an address touched the bishop's sleeve and murmured:

"'I need not speak. I hardly think they expect me.'

"'Oh, to be sure they do!" cried the bishop. 'To be sure they do! Don't you see, they are all going?'"



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Or, BEYOND THE RIO GRANDE By LIEUT. VICTOR O. ENDOLL

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Begun in No. 17, April 25. Subscriptions can begin with that issue or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER V.

UNFRIENDLY FRIENDS.

THERE came a crack of rifles, followed by a wreath of smoke, as our young Americans dashed headlong into the Mexican group.

"Halt, Gringos!"

Forty rifles fell to a level, covering the impetuous youngsters from across the line. The head Mexican, a fellow with a soldierly bearing, yet possessing a dark, half-Indian expression, and wearing the uniform of a captain of cavalry, faced Jack Brady with drawn saber.

Just beyond the main group lay the body of the prisoner, riddled with bullets. The boys had been a minute too late to save the life of the prisoner, who had fallen a victim to the ferocity of the barbarous customs of the country.

"You are prisoners!" thundered the Mexican captain.

This was true. Jack now saw his mistake. His keen dark eyes shot sharp glances toward the dead man. He saw at a glance that he was not an American, therefore of less interest to him than had it been otherwise and the murdered one a citizen of the United States. The boy captain breathed easier, knowing as he did that the victim was not his uncle.

"Who is he?" asked Steve, gazing with Jack at the silent form on the ground. The Mexican captain only grunted, ordering the boys to give up their arms—rifles and revolvers.

"Not just yet," said Jack. "You might serve us as you did yonder poor fellow," pointing to the dead man. "Why did you shoot him?"

"He was a rebel spy," answered the Mexican captain, still frowning.

"You are for the Madero government?"

"Pedro Guzman draws his sword only in defense of Mexico," and the speaker drew himself up haughtily. "Dismount, boy, and deliver your gun."

"Captain Guzman, eh?"

Major McGreggor urged his mustang into the group under the tree. He held out a friendly hand toward the Mexican captain. The latter continued to scowl and look anything but pleased.

"See here, Pedro, no airs now," flung out the Major. "You know me well enough, so what's the use of acting like a haughty Yankee schoolma'am?"

"What—'tis the Gringo, Dan'l Mackgriggor!" suddenly ejaculated the captain of the Greaser cavalry, accepting the American's offer of friendship with a peculiar laugh. The Major slipped to the ground, explaining to the Federal officer the situation of affairs as regarded himself and friends.

"Senor Carlingford? Yes, yes, I know him," quickly articulated Guzman, his snake-black eyes filled with interest.

It was lucky for the boys that they found in the Mexican one whom the old major knew, otherwise they would have been made prisoners and perhaps shot as spies. McGreggor had spent several years of his life after the close of the Civil War in the Mexican country, and was very well versed in Mexican character. Captain Guzman seemed pleased to meet his American friend, likely because, as the old man afterward explained to Jack, he had once saved the other's life.

Jack asked eagerly after his uncle. Captain Guzman assured the boy that his uncle was considered a good citizen, and that if he had been molested, it was by gangs of Insurrectos and not by soldiers of Madero.

"We are on our way to join General Gonzalar," he explained. "There'll be some fighting all along the line before many days. It won't be safe for outsiders. Come with us; join your fortunes with the Madero party, the Government which represents true liberty."

Jack and Steve consulted. Captain Guzman assured them that his party would pass within a mile of the Carlingford hacienda, which decided the boys, with the Major's consent and advice, to go along with the Federal cavalry. Soon afterward they were regretting their decision.

Night shadows were falling when the little company of Mexican soldiers came to a halt in the outskirts of a considerable town.

"Here's where we rest for the night," said Guzman.

"And the Carlingford hacienda is a mile to the east," declared Major McGreggor, who was getting his bearings, and found himself in a well-remembered part of the Mexican republic.

When the boys decided to seek the American ranch, the Mexican captain put in a remonstrance.

"You will stay with us for the present," he assured them.

"I guess not," from Jack, who had not dismounted.

"You stay with us," again commanded the Mexican captain. There was a ring of anger in the voice that warned Jack to be on his guard.

"One can't trust a Greaser out of his sight," thought the boy, angry himself at the turn affairs had taken. To be within a mile of his uncle's cattle ranch and be forbidden to call meant hot feelings on Jack's part. He did not dismount till the Major suggested that it would be for the best.

"By thunder!" imprecated the boy captain, as he slid from the saddle down beside Major McGreggor, who had before this dismounted, "I don't like to be told what I shall and shall not do by a [illegible]

"Hist! Be careful," warned Major McGreggor, placing a hand over the lips of indiscreet Jack Brady. Steve still sat his mustang, pale and looking as though he wanted to do something desperate.

The Mexicans began preparing for a night camp.

"I don't see why we can't do as we choose about staying here," muttered the lean boy under his breath.

A Mexican soldier grasped the boy by the leg, and drew him forcibly from the saddle, uttering an unintelligible oath. The outlook was decidedly unpleasant.

"Looks like we were prisoners!" whispered Steve to Jack. "I'd like to belt that Greaser in the nose for pulling me out of the saddle."

"I guess we are prisoners, all right," muttered Jack in return. "I shan't stand for it very long, though. I mean to go to Uncle Darius' ranch before morning. See if I don't."

"I'm with you there, old chum, agreed Steve.

The two boys decided to humor their captors for a time, each inwardly resolved, however, to get away from the company of their Mexican friends at the earliest opportunity.

A party was sent out to raid the neighborhood for food. They soon returned loaded with eatables, which the frightened natives dared not refuse to the soldiers of the new Government. Jack and his friends were given food with the rest, Captain Guzman and Major McGreggor conversing in a very friendly manner meantime.

After the meal Jack called to the Major, who went aside with his boy friend. Both were, however, under the watchful eye of more than one of the bravos of the camp.

"These are queer guys," began Jack, making a wry face. "We missed it allowing ourselves to accept their company and hospitality. I am sorry we did it now; but, you see, I feared their prisoner might be Uncle Darius. The shooting of that poor fellow was a blamed shame—cold-blooded murder, I call it."

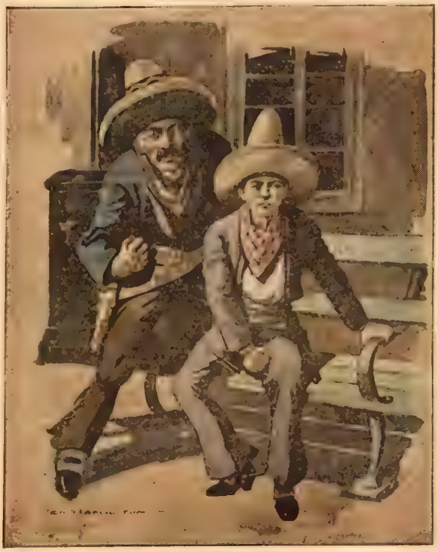
"It's the way with the Mexicans," declared Major McGreggor.

"A most cowardly and brutal way," growled Jack.

"That's true," agreed the Major.

"What sort of a friend is this captain to you, Major," cried the boy, "to make a prisoner of you and your friends?"

"I understand that they are expecting a Madero army along to attack Sulazar. They expect to join the main body and go into the fight. Although Captain Guzman calls me friend, I am yet an American—all such are at the present time under suspicion. We cannot hope to go free until after the battle."



"Now, what are you going to do, eh?"

"And do they expect us to take part in it?"

"Hardly that, although it would please the Captain to have us do so."

"Please him or not, I don't mean to take any part in the quarrels of a pack of dirty Greasers," declared the boy captain. "And another thing, I'm going to give these fellows the slip at the first possible chance, you may bet on that."

"Don't be rash, Jack," again warned the old Major.

"No, not rash, but determined on having my rights," whispered Jack, as he saw one of the Greasers watching them closely. "Now, if we are only a mile from the Carlingford hacienda, it would be easy enough for me to find it. Can you direct me, Major?"

"I might."

"Do so then, please."

Major McGreggor gave the proper direction without lifting a hand to point, not wishing to excite suspicion on the part of the soldiers. Jack was a ready listener, quick to comprehend every point of importance.

That night, after all had quieted down in camp, most of the Mexicans lying about with heads on saddles, a form rose, an ear attuned to listening. An instant thus, then Jack crept to his feet and glided to where his own mustang was picketed.

It was but the work of a moment for the boy to throw on his saddle. He was soon mounted. Loosing his rein, planting his spurs, he gave the word to go, and the mustang shot away like an arrow into the night.

CHAPTER VI.

AT THE HACIENDA.

A GREAT startled cry rang out from the Federal camp. There was quick springing to saddle and almost immediate pursuit. The clatter of half a dozen horsemen fell on the night air as they went swiftly into the starlit night.

Major McGreggor and Steve Hasty were among the first to be aroused. The lean youth was quick to discover the cause for the excitement. The move was a bold one on the part of Jack Brady. Foolhardy, the Major pronounced it, and yet, when Steve stepped to his side and whispered: "Now is our time," the old tutor seemed to fall in instantly with the boy's suggestion.

Captain Guzman ordered his men to quiet down. Those who had gone in pursuit were sufficient to capture and bring back the runaway boy; it was nonsense to set the whole company on the chase. From the distance came the sound of firearms. Plainly the pursuing Mexicans were sending shots after the fleeing boy.

Steve and the Major were very much alarmed for the safety of bold and reckless Jack Brady. Captain Guzman assured them that his men were simply firing to frighten the runaway into surrender, and not to kill.

"I think my friend Steve and myself will go," said the Major, walking to where his animal was picketed.

"No," commanded the Mexican captain, "you two will remain with us." Not even the friendship of the officer for McGreggor would permit him to give his consent to their departure. "If by a mishap your friend Brady is shot, he will have himself to blame, not the Mexican soldiery."

Meantime Jack Brady was riding like the wind, shaping his course toward a range of hills that loomed dark and forbidding not far away. He soon distanced his pursuers, gaining a strip of timber where it was easy enough for him to hide. In the course of half an hour, after spending several useless shots, the soldiers rode away on the return.

Left alone, Jack formed his plans for the night. It was his earnest desire to get to the Carlingford hacienda and learn if his relatives were any of them at home. From the description the Major gave, the boy believed he should have no trouble in locating the place, which was not many miles outside of San Pedro itself.

Easing his rifle down across the saddle in front, the boy rode out from his concealment, making his way along a grass-grown stretch of ground to the east. The Southern stars twinkled above, the night air rustling in balmy zephyrs across the placid fields.

Within ten minutes the mustang's feet settled into a well-worn road. This Jack believed was the highway leading past the hacienda of his uncle. Putting the mustang into a sharp trot, Jack was not long in coming in sight of a cluster of farm buildings.

Drawing rein, the boy glanced up a lane that led past the low barns to the house. Here, surely, was a considerable hacienda—it must be his uncle's. A light gleamed in the distance, and Jack spurred up the lane, halting before the low, wide door of the flat, queer-looking dwelling. A light glowed from one of the windows, and Jack resolved to investigate.

Dismounting, he hitched his animal, swung his gun down across the hollow of his arm, and went boldly to the door, rapping with his knuckles. After a moment of hesitancy the door was opened a narrow bit, a human face appearing in the aperture.

"Who's there?" asked a voice in very good English.

"A friend, all right," reassured the boy.

"The owner not home; call again," and the door was closed with a bang. Then came the rattle of a chain and the sound of a slipping bolt. Jack was very summarily dismissed, much to his disgust. He would not have it so, however.

"I'll go in now, if it's through the window," he muttered, turning aside to where the light flickered through the pane.

Before the curtain was drawn, the boy caught sight of a face that startled and interested him—the face of a young girl who looked pale and frightened. There could be no danger from such a person. His uncle had a young daughter; this might be she, and he was more than ever determined to seet foot beyond the portal of that house.

Going back to the door he again applied his bare knuckles

"Let me in," he called. "I am here to see Senor Carlingford."

"He is not here," answered a man's voice.

"But this is his home——"

"Once it was, not now."

"Why not now?"

"Senor Darius Carlingford aided the Insurrectos; his property has been confiscated by the Government. I am on guard here. Go away, or I shall fire on you. Be quick about it, too!"

Rather peremptory orders. Now that he was assured that the house belonged to his uncle, Jack Brady was more determined than ever to see his adventure through to the end. He only regretted not having his boy riflemen with him at this moment. Tney could easily have battered down the door and taken possession of the hacienda buildings.

"I must come in and talk with you," called back the boy. No answer. Then he cried indignantly: "Let me in or you shall answer to the American Government. I have orders to find Senor Carlingford and restore him to his own. Are members of his family present?"

A mumble of words followed. Jack could hear a soft feminine voice pleading with a coarser man's voice. Later the chain again rattled and the door was slowly opened. This time a girl, scarcely more than a child, filled the aperture.

"You may come in, young senor," she said, in a low voice, which he fancied trembled in fear.

The moment he crossed the threshold a light flashed full in his face. He was confronted by a man, whose white face, sunken eyes, and stooping shoulders proclaimed him one who had ridden through nearly all the sands of life.

"How—a mere boy!" ejaculated the old dweller, surprisedly.

Behind the man, half crouching, was a girl of perhaps fifteen, pretty with a certain Oriental beauty, large dark eyes, midnight hair, and supple, slender form. She was clad as a Mexican senorita and her shrinking, fear-marked face appealed strongly to the boy adventurer.

"You—you are not a Mexican?" from the parted lips of the senorita.

"Don't I look like one?" and Jack drew off his sombrero, whipping his knee with its wide brim. His rifle was strapped to his back, his only weapon in sight, since his revolver was concealed in a deep pocket made for the purpose.

"No," shaking her pretty head, "you are a Gringo."

"Let it go at that if you like," agreed the young American, pleased to be an object of so much notice. "What I wish to know is about this ranch, the people who live here—they are friends of mine."

"Senor Carlingford your friend?"

The man's eyes blackened, his teeth revealed in a sinister grin.

"A relative," informed Jack. "This is his place. I am come for him and his wife and daughter. Where are they?"

After a moment of hesitancy the man said: "Do you know Pedro Guzman, the Madero captain?"

"Yes," answered the boy, quickly. "I have but lately come from his camp."

"So!" with an uplift of gray brows. "He is the man for you to appeal to. He has exercised much authority around here, capturing and shooting traitors at a great rate. Two Americanos were taken out and shot only last week."

"By whose orders?"

"Captain Guzman's."

"The villain! Who were these victims, senor——"

"Ramasay, senor, Prado Ramasay—this is my child, the last," pointing to the girl. "Her mother and brothers all gone, shot by order of Guzman."

"You don't tell me!" gasped the astonished Jack. "You folks must belong to the Insurrectos——"

"No, no!" shaking his gray head. "Captain Guzman is a villain. Although he pretends to serve the cause of Madero and Mexico, he is ravaging the land as any other low brigand. It gives him excuse to rob and murder. This relative of yours is dead, his family fugitives because he wanted this hacienda. It was his men that drove off the cattle, confiscating everything, insulting the women, and laying claim himself to all the lands about. Oh, it's terrible! Red Sulazar and all his rabble are no worse."

"And Captain Guzman poses as a friend of Madero?"

"So he does——"

"And my Uncle Darius has been slain, his family driven out by this scamp?"

"It is indeed so," assured the other.

Chilled and horrified by the news, Jack drew his rifle to the front, struck the breech with his open palm, crying:

"Captain Guzman, villain and murderer, you shall pay for all this!"

Even as he spoke a loud clatter of hoofs fell on their air outside.

CHAPTER VII.

FLIGHT AND PURSUIT.

A BAND of horsemen whirled up before the rambling house. Jack looked from the window and was able to count them, an even dozen. His first thought was that they were Captain Guzman's men in pursuit of himself.

The senorita stepped quickly beside Jack and gazed outside. An instant thus, then she gasped, reeling back:

"The Reds, senor!"

Jack saw at once that the girl was deeply excited. Not so the man. At the low cry from the girl his face brightened, a grin disfiguring his evil face.

"Sulazar forever!" cried the Mexican, going to and opening the heavy door. The light fingers of the girl clutched the arm of Jack Brady. She lifted her white face to his in wild-eyed affright.

"Why do you tremble?" whispered Jack, himself a deal puzzled to understand the complexities of the case. If Captain Guzman of the National Guard was such a scoundrel as the Mexican had painted him, surely the Reds could not be much worse.

"Don't you see," she cried. "They are his friends! You will be murdered! Come quickly, Senor Americano."

Plucking at his sleeve, the girl led Jack away from the window. Even as she did so a sound of steps clattering up to the portal smote their ears.

"By George Washington, this is getting interesting!" exclaimed the American boy. He had no great craving for an interview with the Red Flaggers. They were a set of cutthroats, all right enough, even as were the men under Captain Guzman. Jack suffered himself to be led to another part of the house, the low kitchen, in fact, where a candle was burning on the wall in a brass socket. The light illumined the low adobe-walled room but dimly.

"Senor," began the pretty girl.

"I am Jack Brady. At your service, my girl," cried the boy, "and you are——"

"Izora Barnado, daughter of Don Fermando Barnado of Mexico City," quickly informed the pretty girl, her English almost as perfect as Jack's. "You wonder why I am so far from home, and why this man," motioning over her shoulder, "told you I was his child?"

"That's it exactly, Senorita Izora," exclaimed Jack, eagerly interested.

"It's a long story; I can't tell it now. Don Fernando Barnado, my father, supports President Madero; the Reds are our bitters enemies. I was sent up north to be safe from the dangers that seemed to threaten near home. It was a rude awakening to learn that we ran into the danger zone instead of getting away from it."

"But this man Ramasay called you his daughter?"

"Only for a blind," murmured the red lips of Senorita Izora. "I knew the Carlingfords, and it was here I expected to make my home. You see, it was expected that an American would be safe from either party to this revolution. It was a mistake. We found the American rancher driven away. I know not what to do, only that I am anxious to escape from that man——"

"Senor Ramasay?"

"Yes," with a shudder.

"You tell me he is not your father?"

"He is not, although he has been a friend apparently. He is related to us in a distant way, but he is a schemer. I fear he is in league with the Insurrectos. When I found this house deserted I wanted to go back home, but Don Prado remonstrated. We were talking when you came. You are an Americano; with one of them I feel safe. My mother was one of your people."

"Good!" exclaimed the boy. "I only wish I had a safe shelter to offer. Do you know nothing of my uncle, of his people—their present whereabouts?"

"Not a thing," answered the girl. "Don Padro fetched me here. We found the house deserted, the cattle gone from the fields, everything desolated, as it were."

"Is the man's story true about Captain Guzman?"

"I very much fear it is."

The boy stood silent for a full minute regarding his fair companion. Strange he should thus run upon the daughter of a wealthy Mexican don. What was his duty in the matter? He spoke again, saying:

"There's a lot of trouble all round. What do you expect to do, Senorita Izora? Will you remain with this old relative, or——"

"Oh, that is why I am troubled!" cried the girl. "I fear that man Don Prado. He has acted strangely. What I wish now is to get to the railway and return immediately to Mexico City, back to my parents."

"Would it be safe?"

"It isn't safe here," she whispered. "If I had found the Carlingfords it would have been different."

"True enough," assented Jack.

Voices in the front of the house attracted the notice of boy and girl. Soon they would have to confront the soldiers who had been admitted by this girl's sinister relative. If his intentions were honest, why had the man been so fast to admit them to the house?

Jack felt it would be a comparatively easy matter to effect his own escape, but could he go and leave Senorita Izora to her fate?

"Oh, sir," pleaded the girl, her dark Mexican eyes fixed entreatingly on his face, "can you not do something?"

"I can make a dash for liberty," he answered.

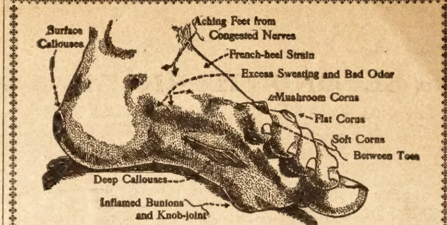
"What, and leave me with these wicked men?"

The sudden whiteness of the speaker's face startled Jack.

"Not by a jugful!" he articulated.

Taking her hand he led her across the floor to the low door. It could not be far to the nearest railway station, and he would take her there, see her safely on her homeward journey, after which he could turn his attention to finding Darius Carlingford.

Steps approaching caused Jack to open the outer door quickly and push Senorita Izora into the outer air. At the same moment several scowling Greasers burst into the little back kitchen with Don Prado at their head.



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"Here they are!" yelled the man. "Halt there, Americano! Senorita Izora, you come straight back to me!"

Jack, quick as a flash, darted after his charge, slamming the door to behind him. Then he caught the Senorita Izora about the waist, carrying her along as he ran into the darkness.

He expected pursuit and was not to be disappointed. At the corner of the house he turned to see several dark forms spring through the doorway in pursuit. Jack ran on the length of the low house of adobe walls, gaining the front, where several animals stood hitched beside his own.

"Can you ride?" asked he in a low whisper.

"Yes, I am a very good horsewoman," she answered his hurried query.

He placed the senorita on the back of his own steed, then turned, after loosening the strap, to one of the animals belonging to the soldiers. He was not long in vaulting into the saddle.

"Halt, Gringo, halt!"

Thus called the Mexicans as they dashed rapidly into view in the semi-gloom. Jack, now safely in the saddle, gave the animal free rein.

"Lead to the station, senorita," called Jack.

Away across the stubble dashed the girl and boy. They had gained a furlong of distance ere the Greasers got into their saddles and set out in pursuit. Jack spurred up alongside Izora. He was pleased to see that she sat the saddle with the easy confidence of a cowboy.

A gun cracked, a bullet whistling over their heads. It seemed that the marauders did not intend to give up the chase without an effort to capture the boy and girl. Jack knew that his own capture, after what had taken place, meant his immediate execution by the cowardly Reds.

The American boy's interest in this girl friend of his uncle's family deepened with the increasing danger. He was resolved to save her from the clutches of the infamous Senor Prado Ramasay at every hazard.

The race across the country was a pretty one. At another time the boy would have delighted in that ride; now he felt all the grave responsibilities that rested upon him, and was consequently sobered and intensely in earnest. Freeing his revolver, he sent back a shot in answer to several that were being unloosed on the senorita and himself.

Jack Brady was having a lot of adventure this first day and night on Mexican soil. As they dashed on, the sound of pursuit died out, and soon the boy and girl slackened their speed and listened.

"Ah ha!" ejaculated Jack, "the rascals have given up the chase."

"It seems too good to be true," faintly welled from the lips of Izora Barnado. No sounds of pursuit were heard. Boy and girl rode at a slower speed, arriving soon in sight of the railway station lights.

They drove up and dismounted. Jack assisted his pretty companion to the little waitingroom, after which he went out to make provision for the mustangs. When he returned to the waitingroom he found it empty. After a few minutes he went to the agent, inquiring after his late companion.

"The senorita? Oh, yes, she went out with a man just after the senor."

Jack stood dumb for an instant, then turned to look into the grinning face of Captain Pedro Guzman.

CHAPTER VIII.

RANSOM DEMANDED.

JACK'S hand fell to the butt of his revolver.

"No need of that, Americano boy," chuckled the Mexican captain. "There won't be any shooting here if I can prevent it. You ran away from your friends when you gave us the slip tonight. Where did you go?"

"To the Carlingford hacienda," answered careful Jack, keeping his gaze fixed on the Mexican, not wishing to be taken unawares. He felt that he would be capable of coping single-handed with Captain Guzman, providing it came to a contest between them. He found himself wondering how the fellow happened to be in this part of the country at this hour, when he had left him encamped miles up the country, apparently intent on remaining there for the night.

"Right over here and sit down, Jack Brady," said the Mexican, his face lit with a pleasant smile.

"Are you alone, sir?" questioned the boy.

"All alone, my boy," laughingly returned the Greaser captain. "You got away from my camp all right, early in the night. I guessed mighty close where you would go; then I rode over here, thinking you might want to go away on the cars."

"Well, even then, why does it concern you, Senor Guzman?"

"Captain Guzman at your service," haughtily.

"I beg pardon——"

"Never mind," broke in the Captain; "we won't waste time on useless things. You are the son of Randall Brady of the American copper mines. I learned as much from my old friend Major McGreggor. We are old friends. I understand you are seeking for your Uncle Carlingford; want to see him very bad?"

"That is true; that is my mission to Mexico," answered the boy, frankly.

Jack did not forget what Izora and her relative and told him about this Captain Guzman's part in the disappearance of his uncle. He was therefore suspicious of the Captain's good intentions.

"I am hopeful," began the other, smiling in an insinuating way, "that I may be able to help you. The Federals are gaining ground everywhere over this vile rebellion against the Government. The rebels are no better than brigands."

"No better," assented Jack.

"I have learned that it was a lot of these red-flag villains that laid waste to your good uncle's hacienda, making him and his family prisoners. I shall be able to save them with your help, Americano boy."

The black eyes of the speaker glistened as he leaned toward his companion, whispering the last words in the boy's ear.

"With my help, Senor—er—Captain Guzman?"

"That's it, Americano boy," chuckled the Mexican leader. "It's money, plenty of it, that'll do the business."

"Money? How?"

"I know the villains who have your people imprisoned. They will demand a ransom—money, a lot. Now——"

"What!" exclaimed the indignant Jack Brady, "you demand a ransom for the release of Uncle Darius Carlingford?"

"No, no!" quickly protested the Captain, "not I, but the brigands who have your dear uncle in charge.

"Who is the brigand?"

"One half-Americano called Balboa Brazzard, a Red Flagger and a most evil man. Through my scouts I have learned that he has your dear relatives in durance, and for their release demands money. Now, what you going to do, eh?"

The speaker's black eyes snapped with an avaricious light. Jack could see that the money question very much interested Captain Guzman. He at once decided that the man was a first-class rascal, and that he and not another was at the bottom of his uncle's disappearance.

"You cold-blooded scamp!" uttered the boy, unthinkingly. "You would hold my uncle's relatives up and rob them like an ordinary cutpurse or highwayman. Is that the manner of government you have in Mexico? Isn't there any honor among the adherents of Francisco Madero, the reformer?"

The boy saw his mistake when an angry flash filled the eyes of the Mexican.

"I have made you a fair proposition; you choose to turn it down. I have no more to say. I am offended; my good government is flouted. When next the Americano boy views his uncle it will be as a clod, ready for the burial—and the wife and daughter—peste! What shall I say?"

The speaker sprang to his feet, his saber rattling against the stone floor.

The angry man was about to make his exit when Jack called to him.

"Hold on a minute, Senor Captain."

But Guzman pushed on, going through the open door. Jack sprang up and at once followed. He caught the Mexican just outside the portal and plucked his sleeve.

"Don't be foolish, Captain," urged the boy. "I am willing to do anything to save my relatives. Do you think they are really in danger?"

For answer the Greaser captain returned inside, produced from his pocket a letter which he handed to Brady. Opening this, the boy read in a fairly intelligible scrawl.

"Captain Guzman: I am holding the Senor Carlingford. The cause of the people is very much impecunious; must have funds immediate. Be quick. Send me a good sum—no less than twenty thousand Americano dollars—for the good of our noble cause, and for the release of the Americano Senor Carlingford. Do this very quick, as we can't wait, nor can we be burdened more than a few hours with prisoners, either men or females.

"BALBOA BRAZZARD."

Jack read the note, his heart sinking. He knew what not being burdened with prisoners meant—the early death of his relatives. If his brave border rifles had been with him, then he would have promptly seized this impudent Mexican captain and started a counter demand. As it was, he found himself helpless.

The black eyes of Captain Guzman searched the reader's face, a sardonic grin overspreading his countenance.

"The Americano boy will understand that Captain Guzman is not lying," chuckled the fellow.

Of course there was the possibility of this letter being forged for the occasion, yet Jack had no assurance of this, and he was growing deeply anxious about his uncle's family.

"I don't see how I can do anything," finally announced Jack.

"Let me tell Americano boy," quickly uttered the Mexican. "You can go to El Paso, send telegram to father; tell him all how it is. If money not sent, then his brother, wife, and child all die by brigand's hand."

"I'll think about it, Senor Captain."

"All right, but you must act quick."

Jack paced the floor, puzzled and deeply troubled. The Mexican captain stood idly by the door waiting. The boy regarded the fellow furtively. He saw a certain look, half of cunning, half of triumph, revealed on the dark face, and at once decided his course of action.

There might be a brigand by the name of Brazzard, but our Boy Scout believed that this was only another name for Captain Guzman. He would humor the villain, play his wits against those of the Mexican, trusting to luck and a brave heart to bring out everything as it should be. That his uncle and family were held prisoners he had not the least doubt. To find their place of imprisonment and release them was what he had before him, a by no means light task.

"I will look into this," said Jack, raising the hand that clutched the letter. "Now tell me what you have done with Senorita Izora."

The Captain indignantly denied all knowledge of the girl, and the boy believed the fellow was telling the truth. He professed not to know the young miss, although he acknowledged knowing in a faint way of Don Fernando Barnado, the girl's father.

"The don is a fierce Maderoist all right."

After this the Mexican captain seemed to be satisfied. He gave the boy directions where to find him at any time during the next fortnight, then he went out, disappearing in the starlit night.

Jack turned to the ticket seller, on the point of asking for further information with regard to Izora, when a whistle sounded not far away. The headlight of the locomotive flared through the night, and our boy hero hastened to the outside.

"Izora!" exclaimed the boy, seeing a girl hasten from the darkness toward the cars.

"Ah, I am glad you have not deserted me, Senor Jack!" murmured the girl, taking his hand, drawing him after her up the steps of the car. "I have much to tell you."

"But!" exclaimed Jack, as the train began to move, "I have no time to stop; the train is going, I must get off." When he would have escaped, she held fast to his hand, drawing him after her down the aisle.

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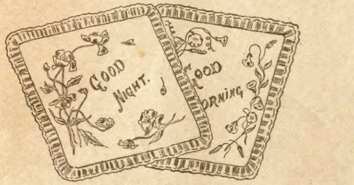

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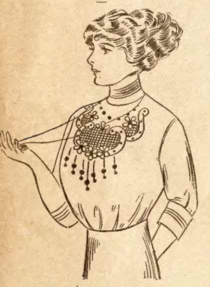

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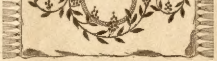

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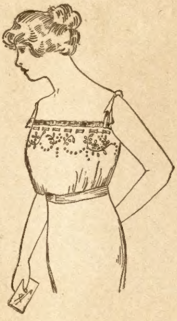

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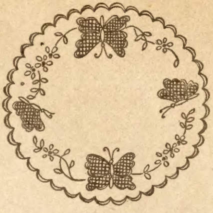

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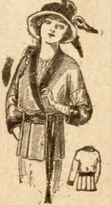

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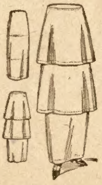

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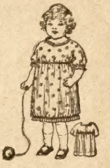

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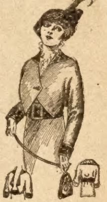

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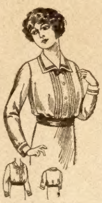

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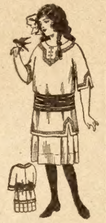

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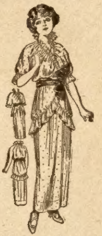

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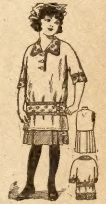

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A Big Black Bear.

Scotch Plains is not in Perthshire or anywhere else in Scotland. It is in New Jersey and so near New York that its residents (many of them) go into the big city every day to work. That is, the men do. So by the time the children are packing off for school there aren't many fathers or grown-up brothers left in town.

Most of the men had left one morning when terror came to take their place. The news spread by telephone. "There's a bear loose." Now, a bear loose or a bear tied is an extraordinary thing to see in Scotch Plains. Bears don't grow wild in that neighborhood, and it wasn't the season for the beasts that dance to the tunes of their masters' accordions. But the mothers didn't stop to wonder why or what. It was a bear and therefore dangerous, and so the children didn't go to school that day.

That bear had as much fun in Scotch Plains as a boy could have in a place where whippings are unknown. He smashed things in yards, especially chicken coops, and he killed and ate the chickens he could catch. He had a collection of all the dogs in town barking at a safe distance from him, but he didn't mind. He was used to dogs.

You see, he really was a fairly tame bear. His home was on a farm near town, and he belonged to a breeder of animals and birds. He had broken out of his cage early in the morning and followed his nose to Scotch Plains. Here he was captured after a while by his owner and some helpers, at sight of whom he first fled up a tree, from which he had to be pulled down by a lasso. The capture was a long process. It took an hour and a half, and by that time some of the men had tears in their coats and scratches in their flesh. And the children had a holiday with a vaudeville performance thrown in.

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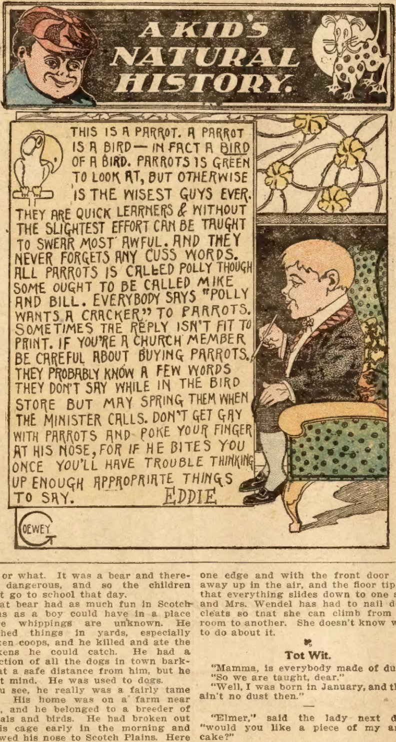
A Bad Boy.

Somebody gave Tom Smith a copy of the "Arabian Nights Entertainment" (at least he got the book somewhere and somehow), and he liked the story about Aladdin and the wonderful lamp. He got an old droplight and carried it out on the back porch and rubbed it, and a genie appeared with a clap of thunder and a great cloud of smoke, and before Tom could send the slave of the lamp away there were seven fire engines in front of the house. And then, another time he climbed up in the steeple of the church in the next street and unhooked the bell and hung it down outside the belfry by a fishing line. The bell is hanging there yet, because it is so heavy that it can't be pulled up without a block and tackle.

But the worst thing Tom did was tipping up Mrs. Wendel's cottage. That is a little one-story frame house and old Mrs. Wendel lives there alone. Tom was batting a ball about, and it rolled under the cottage. He went in to get it, but there wasn't enough room to stand up in, and so he tipped up the house on end. He tipped it some more so that he could see to find his ball, and then he found that he couldn't pull the house down again. And there it stands, balanced on one edge and with the front door still away up in the air, and the floor tips so that everything slides down to one side, and Mrs. Wendel has had to nail down cleats so that she can climb from one room to another. She doesn't know what to do about it.



A KID'S NATURAL HISTORY.

THIS IS A PARROT. A PARROT IS A BIRD— IN FACT A BIRD OF A BIRD. PARROTS IS GREEN TO LOOK AT, BUT OTHERWISE IS THE WISEST GUYS EVER. THEY ARE QUICK LEARNERS & WITHOUT THE SLIGHTEST EFFORT CAN BE TAUGHT TO SWEAR MOST AWFUL. AND THEY NEVER FORGETS ANY CUSS WORDS. ALL PARROTS IS CALLED POLLY THOUGH SOME OUGHT TO BE CALLED MIKE AND BILL. EVERYBODY SAYS "POLLY WANTS A CRACKER" TO PARROTS. SOMETIMES THE REPLY ISN'T FIT TO PRINT. IF YOU'RE A CHURCH MEMBER BE CAREFUL ABOUT BUYING PARROTS. THEY PROBABLY KNOW A FEW WORDS THEY DON'T SAY WHILE IN THE BIRD STORE BUT MAY SPRING THEM WHEN THE MINISTER CALLS. DON'T GET GAY WITH PARROTS AND POKE YOUR FINGER AT HIS NOSE, FOR IF HE BITES YOU ONCE YOU'LL HAVE TROUBLE THINKING UP ENOUGH APPROPRIATE THINGS TO SAY.

EDDIE

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Tot Wit.

"Mamma, is everybody made of dust?"

"So we are taught, dear."

"Well, I was born in January, and there ain't no dust then."

—

"Elmer," said the lady next door, "would you like a piece of my angel cake?"

"No, thank you," replied Elmer. "I don't want to be anything but a boy yet a while."

—

"Bobby," said a mother to her small son, "run out and look in the cistern and see if there is any water in it."

"Yes, mamma," he reported a minute later. "It's full on the bottom, but there isn't any on top."

—

"There's something in this youngster I like," said the visitor, who was trotting 4-year-old Willie on his knee.

Willie looked at the visitor queerly for a moment, then exclaimed. "Say, who told you I swallowed a penny?"

—

"Why, Marie," said a mother to her 4-year-old daughter, "you ought to be ashamed to have such dirty hands. You never saw my hands like that, did you?"

"No, I guess not," replied Marie, "but I bet my grandma did."

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